

RAEBURN



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HENRY RAE BURN

GEMS OF ART

BOY WITH RABBIT

Painted about 1814

In the Diploma Gallery, Royal Academy



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HENRY RAEBURN

1756 - 1823

By
T.C.F. BROTCHE

1924
CASSELL & COMPANY LIMITED
LONDON • NEW YORK • TORONTO • MELBOURNE



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HENRY RAEBURN

CHAPTER I

OLD EDINBURGH: RAEBURN'S PREDECESSORS

HENRY RAEBURN was born in Stockbridge, a district of Edinburgh, on the 4th of March, 1756. Edinburgh then was a modest town of some sixty thousand inhabitants. His birthplace at Stockbridge was essentially a country cottage, standing beside a placid mill-lade between a "beautiful fruit orchard" and some "fine grass parks." Those who know their Stevenson will remember how David Balfour, after hiding in the barley on the north side of the Lang Dykes (the long dyke or wall of the country road that time has transformed into the stately Princes Street), and having his interview with his sweetheart Catriona at the Dean Village, "took his way down the glen of the Leith river towards Stockbridge and Silvermills" to hold tryst with Alan Breck in the "scrog of wood besouth the mill-lade," and doubtless on his way to the tryst passed the cottage destined to become the birthplace of the great Scottish painter.

Raeburn was not the only Scots artist of note born at Stockbridge, or who made his home on the waterside of Leith. David Roberts, R.A., was a native of the district, and first saw the light in a dilapidated house known as Duncan's Land, a queer old place (judging from a sketch made by E. W. Cooke, R.A.,

about 1840) with a lintel bearing the date 1605 and the wise inscription "Fear God onlye." A pretty story is told in Raeburn's "Life," by his great-grandson, of an encounter that took place in the orchard of St. Bernard's (Sir Henry's mansion) between the famous painter and David Roberts, then a ragged urchin living across the water of Leith. Raeburn caught the lad under the apple-trees of his garden, who, on being challenged, held up a scrap of paper on which he had been sketching the Gothic architecture of the library window. The sketch was well executed, and it led to the boy having not only free access to the grounds, but encouragement and instruction from Raeburn. Another Scots artist of note, also a Stockbridge resident, was Sir John Watson Gordon, and, in a later period, David Scott, R.S.A., and Horatio McCulloch, R.S.A., a Glasgow man by birth and the greatest of the Scottish landscapists of the Victorian age.

Literary memories also cling to the district. James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd" and friend and companion of Scott, wrote his "Queen's Wake" in one of its houses; in another Sir James Young Simpson, the discoverer of chloroform, lodged as a poor student with his brother, a douce Stockbridge baker; George Kemp, the designer and architect of the Scott Monument, in Princes Street, occupied humble apartments in the neighbourhood; and to Comely Bank adjoining, there came in later years Thomas Carlyle and his gentle wife to spend there the first two years of their married life.

In the days of Henry Raeburn the district was beautiful and picturesque. Its green braes were crowned with stately trees, and the haughs by the waterside were bosky with tangled

brakes of bramble and sweet-smelling hawthorn. "At Stockbridge," says the *Edinburgh Advertiser* for 1823 (the year of Raeburn's death), "we cannot but regret that the rage for building is fast destroying the delightful scenery between it and the neighbouring village of the Water of Leith which had so long been a prominent ornament in the environs of our ancient city." Green braes, hawthorn, bramble, and sedgy haughs; mill-lade, rural cottage, and the house of St. Bernard's, occupied so long by Sir Henry Raeburn, have vanished like the snows of yester-year. The spacious suburb, where, on the summer eves of long ago, canny citizens from the neighbouring "great town" were wont to ramble, has become "airt and pairt" of the far spread city. It is included in what is called the New Town, and displays a curious mixture of romance and grandeur with a soupçon of classic beauty in harmony with the atmosphere of the Modern Athens. One of its finest features is the great crescent called St. Bernard's—after the painter's home, or possibly the Hermit of Clairvaux, the saintly Bernard, whose name and fame were used to confer sanctity on an adjacent mineral well, still enshrined within a beautiful Greek temple of the Doric order, designed by Nasmyth in the year 1789. According to tradition, this fine crescent—built on Raeburn's land—was suggested by Sir David Wilkie, who assisted Raeburn in drawing his feuing plans for building. It was constructed by Sir Henry, and the conception is worthy of his fine mentality, for it is adorned with the grandest Grecian Doric pillars to be found in any edifice in this classic northern town.

The artist-pilgrim will search in vain for the residence of Raeburn. The house of St. Bernard's disappeared many years

ago, but the remains of its fine old avenue of elms are to be seen in a rookery near St. Bernard's Crescent; and a tree that stood in front of the door, and under which Raeburn was wont to linger, still survives in a backgreen of the houses known as Leslie Place. Raeburn's mansion of St. Bernard's adorned ground now enclosed, between Leslie Place and Dean Terrace, and its gardens stretched along the river bank. Half-way between the present St. Bernard's Bridge and Stockbridge are to be seen—or were some few years ago—the remains of the little footbridge which the great painter crossed daily on his way to his studio in York Place from his house of St. Bernard's.

Broadly and briefly, such was the scenery of the stage on to which Raeburn stepped in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. A brilliant personnel strutted its brief hour on that stage. "Edinburgh," says Matthew Bramble in "Humphrey Clinker," "is a hotbed of genius." There was no lack of that product in the northern capital during the years of which I write. Indeed, if we take the latter half of the eighteenth century and the first decade of the nineteenth, we visualize two periods of particular brilliance: the first between the years 1754 (when Allan Ramsay, the son of the poet and court painter to George III, formed his Select Society for "philosophical enquiry and the improvement of members in the art of speaking") and 1770, when the turmoil of the "Forty-Five" was melting into a memory; and the second between the French Revolution and the years immediately succeeding Waterloo. In the first, it is the Edinburgh of David Hume, "Jupiter" Carlyle—"the grandest demi-god I ever saw," said Scott—Alex. Boswell (Lord Auchinleck), father of Bozzy and

entertainer of the Great Cham whom he dared to call an “auld dominie wha kept a schule and cau’d it an acaademy,” and, in earlier years—Allan Ramsay painter, courtier, linguist—better had he been thirled to the first, for painting can brook no rivals else, as in his case, is its growth stunted. The second is the period of Burns, Raeburn, and Scott. In these two short stretches of time and around that constellation of famous names there gathers all that is best and most enduring in the æsthetic story of the Scottish race.

Raeburn looms large in that assembly of Titans. He found the art of his country and time at a low ebb. By his supreme genius he raised it to Olympian altitudes. His was a great accomplishment. To understand its significance we must glance briefly at the labours of his worthy, if somewhat mediocre, predecessors.

For a century or so after the Reformation, Scotland cannot be said to have possessed a literature or an art. In all ages and in all countries there has been a strong affinity between these two æsthetic spirits. Scotland is no exception to the unwritten rule. The story of the eighteenth century—the century of Ramsay and Raeburn in art, and Fergusson and Burns in poetry—affords concrete demonstration of how strongly linked, broadly speaking, are the mental and material forces from which may spring the fine flowers of genius. The full blossoming of the gracious plant was exemplified in the lives and work of Raeburn and Burns. The streams which watered it, and from which it gathered life and strength, ran on parallel lines until they coalesced, becoming one and undivisible in the period destined to witness the advent of our greatest Scottish poet and our greatest Scottish portrait painter.

In Raeburn's career, his endeavour and rare achievement, the attribute which seems to have been determinative, was his exuberant vitality. Physically, he was gifted, as only the elect favourites of Nature are, with strength and beauty, and his physical endowments were but a reflex of a rarely dowered intelligence. As with Raeburn, so it was with Burns. A magnificent physique and wonderful personal charm—"sorcery" is the note descriptive left us by a contemporary; eyes like "coals of living fire," said Scott; the only man who ever "carried her off her feet," confessed the beautiful Duchess of Gordon; such was his magnetism over even the average stolid Scot (a dour quantity, my masters !) that if he entered a tavern at midnight when all the inmates were abed, the news of his arrival circulated from cellar to garret, and ere ten minutes had elapsed the landlord and all his servants and guests had assembled to greet the newcomer. This noble faculty, this exuberant physical and mental vitality, was the gift of the gods, long delayed to the nation; but, when it did come, poured out with unstinted generosity.

These great Scotsmen—Burns and Raeburn—were contemporaries; but, strange to relate, they never met. In that the gods were unkind, yet their lives are linked together after a fashion of profound interest not only to Scotsmen, but to all lovers of a nation's greater personalities. It is instructive and also imperative to glance at the beginnings of the renaissance of which Raeburn and Burns were the rich fruit. At the outset it is but a wimpling burn, but we see its stream broadening and deepening as the century progressed : a majestic rolling river in the later decades which witnessed Burns, Scott, and Hogg

triumphant in the sphere of literature; Raeburn, Wilkie, and Geddes in the vanguard, victorious and leading their compeers along the broad and beautiful highway of art.

Scotland was not blessed with any real literary and artistic awakening until the closing years of the seventeenth and the dawning of the eighteenth century. Of course, one is not oblivious to the magnificent national material of the old "makars," lying forgotten, however, in the manuscripts of George Bannatyne and Richard Maitland, or of "The Pleasant Satyre" of David Lyndsay, with its robustious indecencies, clever and witty, although rather fescennine for the delicate nostrils of our day; nor did the fact that poetry and literature enjoyed the patronage of James VI—himself the author of certain flabby poems and essays—tend to keep in good health the æsthetic body politic. Other vital forces were at work. Of these the primary was the Revolution settlement, with its profoundly far-reaching influence upon the freedom of the thought and action of the people.

The Church that emerged from the fiery ordeal was not the old dominant allwise and overbearing body of the early seventeenth century. It was now possible for a layman of strong character to give utterance to many startling sentiments without incurring the penalty of a persecution that was bitter and oft-times grossly criminal. Hitherto the people had been accustomed to browse on rather scrubby ecclesiastical pastures; but the fences of the old paddocks were broken down finally, and the folks could roam joyfully at large and select their pasturage at their own sweet will. The immediate result was a revived interest in the study of history of a secular rather than ecclesiastical character; history dealing with all the wide variety of

PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER

Painted about 1815

In the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



matters that concern general human well-being and have a bearing on human progress. Hume and Robertson wrote this history from somewhat different angles; but by both with an independence and breadth of judgment to which Scotland hitherto had been unaccustomed. Apart from its historians, this period produced a number of miscellaneous prose writers, but none of remarkable distinction, excepting Falconer and Smollett.

So far as the masses were concerned, the most important form of the literary movement—and latterly the art movement on a parallel stratum—was the revival of vernacular poetry, in which, besides several excellent song writers, the dominating names (before the advent of Burns) were Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, whose rich promise was fulfilled rather through Burns himself. Amongst several men who wrote English verse, the chief was James Thomson, author of “The Seasons.”

Partly by reason of the previous sway of an extreme Puritanism or Calvinism, and partly by reason of his own emotional vitality and artistic mastery of words, Robert Burns gained a hold over the feelings of his countrymen unparalleled in the case of a poet of any other nation. By the comprehensive character of his achievement he made it exceptionally difficult for any successor to win renown as a vernacular poet. He has had many imitators. In a minor fashion his style of art has been practised with some success by Hector Macneill, Lady Nairne, James Hogg, Robert Tannahill, and Alex. Cunningham; in later days, and on a modest scale, by Andrew Lang and Robert Louis Stevenson. The other great Scotsman, Walter Scott, exercised, like Burns, a liberal and de-ecclesiasticizing influence over the narrow

mentality of the so-called aristocratic classes of his time—an influence similar to that exercised by Burns over the masses of the people.

Towards the close of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, poetry, especially in England, drifted on to a classic note entirely artificial and affected. In Scotland an interesting succession of events had cleared the pathway for a fresh beginning. A century earlier the stern Calvinism of Knox and the Reformers had checked the copious stream of national poetry and national art. Lyndsay and Maitland and James V were without legitimate successors. The removal of the court to London in 1603 had turned the genius of the Scot into an exotic vein, and for fifty years the Scotsmen, like Drummond of Hawthornden and William Alexander, wrote on an English model and in an English tongue.

Then amid the political troubles of the country had come a pause. It was late in the evening of the seventeenth century that, as in the first nights of spring, the sweet new singing began to be heard. Out of the simple old folk-songs and ballads of Scotland, the lilts that had been crooned over cradle and spinning-wheel, and the rude lays of battle and love that had lingered for ages in the memory of the people, came the first inspiration of the new world of song. Robert Sempill, of Belltrees, in Renfrewshire, gave the signal of a return to nature and native and natural themes in his immortal "Piper of Kilbarchan," or, as the poem is named, "The Life and Death of Habbie Simpson the Piper of Kilbarchan." The poetic tradition of the Sempills was continued by Frances Sempill, the son of Robert, and the author of probably the oldest version of "Auld Langsyne"

published in broadside form as "an excellent proper ballad entitled Old Long Syne." Burns breathed on it and transmuted it into living and immortal gold. It is but a step from Sempill to Allan Ramsay, collector and poet, and the father of Allan Ramsay the painter. In 1725 he published his "Gentle Shepherd," a poem which at once struck the keynote of the new natural and romantic movement in Scots literature and poetry, and latterly—through David Allan—in art. From that period there was growing up in Scotland a sincerer school. Thomson was painting winter as he actually knew it on Tweedside; Hamilton, of Bangour, and John Home were drawing inspiration from the old narrative ballads; and Jean Elliot and Isabel Pagan were singing sweetly of Flodden Field and love amongst the hills.

Ramsay, with his humour and warmth of colour, was succeeded by Robert Fergusson, with his pithy Scots verse; but Fergusson had but a brief stay on the stage. He died in 1774, at the age of twenty-four, and in his passing Scotland lost a great dramatic poet. In poetic rank Fergusson stands midway between Ramsay and Burns, and to us of to-day he remains a great unrealized possibility.

As with Scottish literature and poetry, so with the art of the period under review. The streams are very similar. Meagre and relatively feeble in the dawn of that age: vigorous and full-blooded at the setting of its years. Art is everywhere, and not at all times conditioned by the same general laws and principles. In these manifestations the arts, unlike the exact sciences, are coloured or shaped by the temperament, beliefs, and outward environment of the peoples among whom they flourish. It is,

I assume, generally agreed that some degree of material well-being is necessary for a national development of the fine arts. Scotland might be regarded as a concrete example of that factor or postulate. The distracted conditions of the country and its dire poverty, which had increased rather than lessened during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, made the cultivation of the arts impossible.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, and notably during the twenty-five years succeeding the Union with England, the already existing poverty was intensified by the removal of many noble families to the new centre of political power, and also by the ruin brought on such Scottish industrial enterprises as were attempting to gain a footing abroad, by laws directed against them through English financial influences in Parliament. It was only after the middle of the century, when political unrest had been ended, following the '45, that the dusky horizon began to clear. During the later decades of the eighteenth century prosperity increased by leaps and bounds. With the advent of material well-being there came the golden age of Scottish national literature, the age of Burns, Scott, and Hogg; and the golden age of our Scottish school of painting in Raeburn, Wilkie, and Geddes. There was no school of Scottish painting until Raeburn and Wilkie gave to national art the characteristics which endure to this day.

Withal, the comparatively placid period following the Union of 1603 produced one artist of more than average merit in George Jameson, of Aberdeen. Jameson painted some of the most prominent personages of these stormy times, Royalist and Covenanter alike—the two great Marquesses Argyll and

Montrose were of the number. He was largely employed at a small remuneration, it is said, by the Scots nobility, and there exist many well-authenticated examples of his portraiture in the "stately homes" of Scotland.

Persistent oral tradition asserts that Jameson studied along with Vandyke under Rubens. Both Walpole and Cunningham accept the traditional view of his Antwerp training; Walpole confers upon him the flattering title "the Scottish Vandyke," and his recent biographer and fellow townsman, John Bulloch, lends all the weight of scholarly research to the view emphasizing it in the title of his volume "George Jameson, the Scottish Vandyke." It must be confessed, however, that no trace of the spirit and splendour of Rubens is manifest in his work. The portrait of George Hutcheson (a great Glasgow merchant and founder of the well-known Hutcheson's Trust), in the Glasgow Art Gallery, is certainly imbued with qualities which suggest Flemish influences; but the handling is timid and the pose stiff: it lacks the rare combination of force and delicacy which lends such a fine distinction to the art of the Flemings. Other characteristic examples of Jameson's are the portraits of his uncle David Anderson, of Fenzeauch, in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and Sir Thomas Hope, in the Advocates Library, Edinburgh. W. D. McKay, R.S.A., in "The Scottish School of Painting," concedes that there is "a something Flemish" in Jameson's work, the probability being that "Jameson had been to Antwerp, where he had seen and perhaps copied the works of Rubens."

We may leave the matter there and pass on to a notable successor, another Aberdeen "loon," John Scougal, who, about

1700, set up as limner in Edinburgh. Worthy portraits by Scougal of William III, Queen Mary, and Queen Anne are in the Glasgow Art Gallery, and in the Scottish National Gallery there is a bust portrait of himself. A contemporary of note was Sir John Medina, a Flemish painter, who settled in Scotland, a clever draughtsman and colourist. He was employed largely by the Scottish nobility. Walpole states that he took to Scotland a number of bodies already painted, to which he added heads as sitters offered. The response seems to have been enthusiastic, judging from the numerous examples of his art existing still in the mansions of the north. Two painters of Scottish origin, however, arose to vindicate the country from the charge of artistic barrenness. William Aikman, a Forfarshire laird, seized by what his canny neighbours deemed insanity, sold his estate when in his plastic youth and proceeded to Rome to study art. Examples of his work are to be seen in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and the London Gallery possesses his portrait of John, Duke of Argyll. He practised in Edinburgh for some years subsequent to 1721, but, like so many of his compatriots, he removed to London, where he died in 1731.

After Aikman, Scottish art had no figure of note until the advent of Allan Ramsay, son of the poet and an artist who, despite the magnificent artistry of Reynolds, was chosen in 1767 court painter to George III. We may assume legitimately that the choice was determined primarily by the courtier-like endowments of Ramsay. Unquestionably he possessed talents of no mean order, but these never attained their full fruition. What might have been finds concrete and elegant demonstration in the altogether charming portrait of his wife in the National

Gallery of Scotland—a picture so much lauded by Wilkie that he recommended a friend to visit Edinburgh so that he might study it.

The Glasgow Gallery is fortunate in the possession of a trio of his large portraits—George II, George III, and Archibald, Third Duke of Argyll (Lord Justice-General and Lord Treasurer of Scotland, and one of the Commissioners for the Treaty of Union). After him is named one of Glasgow's great main thoroughfares—Argyll Street. It is a good example of Ramsay's early work before he became a court favourite and started his London workshop.

David Allan, born in 1744, was the first Scottish artist whose works gave indication of the dawn of a native art. He was not a great painter and, recognizing his limitations, wisely confined himself mostly to tinted drawings of rural life and illustrations for Scottish songs and ballads, notably those of Burns. Three examples of his art are in the Glasgow collection; and in the National Gallery, Edinburgh, is his well-known picture "The Origin of Painting" that gained for him the gold medal of St. Luke's Academy, Rome, in which centre he studied for some years. Allan received his early training in Glasgow in the Art Academy founded in 1753 by the famous book publishers, Robert and Andrew Foulis. With the exception of the short-lived Academy of St. Luke, founded in Edinburgh in 1729, the Foulis venture was the first real attempt to foster art in Scotland. It flourished until 1753, and through its portals passed many good and sound Scottish artists of the eighteenth century, such as Alexander Runciman, who became a devotee of what is termed "classic art"; Robert Paul, the Glasgow topographical

MRS. SCOTT MONCRIEFF ·
In the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



draughtsman; Cordiner, the well-known artist-antiquarian; James Tassie, of Pollokshaws, Glasgow, a stonemason who won world-wide fame as a gem engraver and modeller.

A figure that flits across the stage at this period was David Martin (1736-98), for some years a fashionable portrait painter in Edinburgh. Martin had been one of Allan Ramsay's assistants, and was himself a tolerably competent craftsman, as is evidenced in the portraits preserved in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. According to Cunningham, Ramsay took Martin to Rome "to astonish the Italians with his skill in drawing," but he does not appear to have set the Tiber on fire. His reputation and his memory are preserved primarily because of his association with Raeburn, to whom, at an early period, he filled the rôle of master.

Yet withal, the Ramsays, Runcimans, and Allans could achieve little more than the minimum of skill necessary for the construction of the conventional and respectable history picture or portrait of the day. David Allan's robust common sense had wearied of the shackles of academic tradition, but it required a stronger head and hand than he possessed to shake off the long-established incubus imposed on art by classical nonsense.

"The hour has come, but not the man," said Meg Merrillees to Dirk Hatteraick; so might have said a keen observer of Scottish events at the dawn of the year 1756—the year of the birth of Raeburn. Thirty years later the same observer would have realized that the predestined man had arrived in the person of Henry Raeburn.

CHAPTER II

ANCESTORS : SCHOOLDAYS : THE GOLDSMITH

IT would be pleasant, indeed, were we able to trace Raeburn's ancestry; our knowledge on that point is meagre and, to some extent, speculative. What we do know definitely is that he came of Border stock, located possibly in the neighbourhood of Selkirk, in the very heart of the great borderland of Scotland. No part of the kingdom is more redolent of poetic and romantic memories : it is, indeed, the very homeland of romance. The minstrelsy of the Scottish race has its roots deep down in the history of the Border.

In this glamour-haunted countryside the race from which Raeburn sprang had its home. An ancient place-name near Selkirk is "Raeburn Meadow" : a hill farm in the Annandale airt of the Borders bears the name of Raeburn, and this farm and its lands are said to have been for generations the patrimony of the Raeburns, ancestors of the painter. Curiously enough this small estate passed subsequently into the possession of the Scotts, and the creator of the Waverley Novels sprang from what is called the Raeburn sept or branch of the Clan Scott. In his delightful Memoirs, Scott gives a most interesting sketch of the pedigree. It is certainly curious, and worthy of being put on record, that the greatest Scottish novelist, and his contemporary and friend, the greatest Scottish painter, should have both been able to trace their genealogical tree back to the same source—the bit of hill land in Annandale known as Raeburn.

It is more than probable that the Raeburns took their name from the lands which they long occupied. As remarked, the estate was small, and the Raeburns would be what in Scotland are known as "bonnet lairds"; that is to say, small lairds or lords of the land. The armorial bearings of the family suggest the name—on the shield a Roe or (*Scotice*) Rae-deer drinking from a burn, with the motto "Robur in Deo"—strength in God. According to his earliest biographer, William Raeburn Andrew, M.A., Oxon., a great grandson of the painter, Sir Henry Raeburn, was wont to say that he was a Raeburn of that ilk, his forbears having had the lands of Raeburn before the Scotts got possession. At all events, we do know that Robert, a scion of the family of Raeburn must have left the little farm on the hills of Annandale in the early decades of the eighteenth century and settled in the capital. He made his home in the Stockbridge district of Edinburgh, where, as befitted a man of agricultural upbringing, he worked as a miller, possibly as a yarn boiler. There he met, wooed, and married Ann Elder, the proprietress of the mills at Stockbridge. Two sons were the fruits of this historic and happy union—William, born in 1744, and the artist Henry, born on March 4th, 1756.

While Henry was but a child the father and mother passed over the last dread bourne. The place of the parents they had lost was assumed by William, the elder by twelve years. He took over the management of the Stockbridge business and towards his younger brother enacted the part of a kindly father. In Chambers's "Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen" we read that William gave his brother Henry "the scanty but usual education of the period." At nine years of age Henry was

sent to Heriot's Hospital—an old Edinburgh school, a magnificent example of Renaissance work, and, according to MacGibbon and Ross, in their "Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland," "the finest and most important public building erected in Scotland during the seventeenth century." Standing on the esplanade of the castle we look south across the deep valley wherein the Grassmarket lurks, and crowning the ridge on the southern side is the dignified and beautifully proportioned pile of Heriot's Hospital. This school was founded by the generosity of George Heriot, jeweller to King James in 1601. When he died, in 1623, he bequeathed £23,625 for the building of a school; to quote his own words, "in imitation of the public, pious, and religious work founded within the city of London called Christ's Hospital." His life and works show him to have been "a character" of a pronouncedly Scots type, pawky and consummately shrewd. His personality Scott has endeared to us as "Jingling Geordie" in "The Fortunes of Nigel."

To this ancient foundation the boy Henry Raeburn went in the year 1765. We read in the minutes of the Board of 15th April of that year, that a presentation was laid before the Governors, "granted by Sarah Sandilands relict of Thomas Durham of Bogshead, in favour of Henry, son of Robert Raeburn, Burgess and Freeman, whose parents are both dead." He remained at Heriot's for six years. So far as we know, nothing in his schooldays gave distinct promise of future greatness in art, if we except the fact that "it was only observed at the class of arithmetic when the boys were amusing themselves in drawing figures on their slate, his displayed a very striking superiority to those of other boys." He seemed to have the

gift of caricaturing his comrades, but "this did not lead any further." In other respects Raeburn seems to have been distinguished by the affection of his school-mates, and formed at that early period intimacies with some of those friends whose regard accompanied him through life. His nature, we are told, was open and sincere, and had that quality in it which never estranged friends nor permanently offended anyone. That he did not neglect the ordinary school curriculum is demonstrated by the school records of 4th June, 1770, when "Henry Raeburn and Frances Ronaldson were each awarded, for their skill in writing, etc., the sum of one pound five shillings sterling accruing from Heriot's Mortification." In the following year Henry was again regarded as best entitled to a similar award; it is probable that this was his closing year at school.

Many distinguished figures have passed their schooldays in Heriot's, but amongst these Raeburn is the Titan. He sheds a lustre on the venerable institution, and it is pleasing to suppose that "Jingling Geordie" must be a happy soul in the thought that his earthly beneficence enabled at least one lad o' pairts that were supreme to acquire that knowledge which is so necessary and so precious a possession to all sorts and conditions of men.

With the close of his schooldays commenced the serious business of life. Raeburn was apprenticed to James Gilliland, a goldsmith in Parliament Close, adjacent to the ancient fane of St. Giles, and elbow to elbow, so to speak, with the venerable Tolbooth of Edinburgh, over which Scott threw the mantle of immortality as "The Heart of Midlothian." The Tolbooth vanished a century ago—to be precise, in 1817—and the

Parliament Close was destroyed by a great fire in 1824. In the days of Raeburn the neighbourhood of St. Giles and the Parliament Close formed the great centre of the city gossip, the howff of the lounge and man-about-town of the period. The principal coffee-houses, taverns, and booksellers' shops were in the immediate vicinity, and at certain hours of the day there might be met in one or other of these haunts the leading merchants, the laird, the noble, the men of learning, and the wits; and amongst the more notable of the jolly fellows of the age was James Balfour, an accountant whose memory has come down to us as "Singing Jamie Balfour." Jamie was well known to Sir Walter Scott, and his figure must have been familiar to Raeburn in his apprentice days. In later years Raeburn was commissioned to paint the portrait of this celebrated *bon vivant* and vocalist. It hangs in the Leith Golf-house, a characteristic work of the master, who has portrayed Jamie with a merry countenance, commencing the favourite song of "When I hae a saxpence under my thoom."

Clustered around the Church of St. Giles were the booths of the booksellers, mortmakers (so watchmakers were named), jewellers, and goldsmiths. The goldsmiths were a numerous fraternity, and writers of the period tell us that the Edinburgh goldsmiths were deemed a superior class of craftsmen, and were wont to appear in public with cocked hats, scarlet cloaks, and gold-mounted canes. The father of John Law, of Lauriston, the famous financial projector, was the son of an Edinburgh goldsmith; but by far the most famous of the craft in the old Parliament Close was George Heriot—"Jingling Geordie."

The fact that Raeburn chose this business postulates a

refined and æsthetic taste in the youth. That he was keenly observant is an axiom; and as a goldsmith he would have the opportunity of practising design and of engaging in creative work—an imperative necessity to the temperament of an artist. That both these objectives were to some extent realized finds concrete demonstration in the rapid development of the youth's latent talent. However, we possess direct and incontrovertible evidence that in these early days his master understood and appreciated the unusual ability of his apprentice. The story is interesting and significant. Shortly after Raeburn's death, in 1823, Professor Andrew Duncan, a friend and admirer of the artist, delivered "A tribute to the Memory of Sir Henry Raeburn." In the course of that speech Dr. Duncan referred to a favourite pupil of his own, who in the dissecting-room had contracted blood-poisoning and died about 1778. The student referred to was Charles Darwin, a son of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, a minor and forgotten poet, and uncle of the more famous naturalist, Charles Robert Darwin. Said Dr. Duncan, "I was anxious to retain some slight token in remembrance of my highly esteemed young friend, and for that purpose I obtained a small portion of his hair. I applied to Mr. Gilliland to have it preserved in a mourning ring. *He told me that one of his present apprentices was a young man of great genius* and could prepare for me in hair a memorial that would demonstrate both taste and art. Young Raeburn was immediately called and proposed to execute on a small trinket which might be hung at a watch, a muse weeping over an urn, marked with the initials of Charles Darwin. The trinket was finished by Raeburn in a manner which, to me, afforded manifest proof of very superior

MISS FORBES
In the National Gallery



genius, and I still preserve it as a memorial of the singular and early merit both of Darwin and Raeburn."

I have italicized one of the lines : it is fragrant with significance. It demonstrates that the old goldsmith had observed and was able to appreciate the salient fact that in Raeburn he had a pupil endowed with "great genius." The Doctor was delighted with the trinket : it was "a memorial of the singular and early merit of Raeburn." Admittedly the incident may be regarded as trifling, but clues such as these, though light as air, are strong as links of iron.

Others than his employer recognized the art abilities of the youth. A seal engraver, David Deuchar, who had frequent occasion to see Gilliland on business matters, took a liking to the apprentice, then a tall handsome lad of engaging manners. Calling one day at the goldsmith's booth by St. Giles, he found Raeburn gazing intently into a mirror. "Hullo, Henry," said he, "are you admiring your good looks?" "No," was the reply, "I am trying to draw a likeness of myself." Deuchar examined the drawing. To him it showed signs of promise, and finding that Raeburn had not received any training, he offered to give him an hour's teaching once or twice weekly after business hours. Such an offer must have been very acceptable to the boy, for at that period art training for the youth of the capital was comparatively negligible. It is true there existed the School of Design, founded in 1760 by the Board of Manufacturers. Delacour, the painter, was the first master; and, according to the contemporary advertisement, evidence had to be taken "of the capacity and genius for drawing of persons applying for instruction, before they were admitted to the drawing school."

In passing, it is interesting to note that this was the first School of Design established in the three kingdoms at the public expense. Alex. Runciman, who was trained in the Foulis Academy, became Director of the School of Design in Edinburgh, and occupied that position during Raeburn's apprentice days.

There is no evidence that Raeburn ever attended the Board of Manufactures drawing school. On the contrary, we have the direct statement of David Deuchar that Raeburn "had not received any training"—a statement made to Mr. James Caw by Miss Deuchar, a great-great-granddaughter of the seal engraver. It is permissible to suppose, however, that Raeburn had the benefit of some training at the School of Design, or, alternatively, advice from its directors to supplement the training in design which he was acquiring in the goldsmith's business.

As the result of Deuchar's interest in the boy's progress in drawing, he became convinced that his talent lay in the direction of portrait painting. Additional weight was lent to the conviction by the fine miniature paintings which Raeburn was turning out. According to his great-grandson, Raeburn, "after attaining the age of fifteen began to paint beautiful water-colour miniatures of his friends. In what manner this taste first showed itself is not exactly known; but it certainly was altogether spontaneous, without lesson or example." Probably in the course of his labours as a goldsmith he would design frames for miniatures sent in for framing. Thus he would become acquainted with good work, of which there was abundance in that age—the age of such fine miniaturists as Cosway and Engleheart. Raeburn's miniatures are very pleasant productions, of careful draughtsmanship and good tonal values. As to their merits we

may accept Mr. Caw's just and cautious description of them as "rather simple and direct portraits than elegant abstractions, and their sole interest lies in their having been the prelude to the masculine and virile style he achieved in oil paint." To the untutored and less critical eyes of his friends, the likenesses were good enough to be eagerly sought after.

David Deuchar was impressed by their demonstration of artistic skill, and so also was Mr. Gilliland, his employer. So convinced were these two worthy men of the genius of the youth that they introduced him to David Martin—at that period the leading and fashionable portrait painter of the Scottish metropolis. Martin settled in Edinburgh in 1775, subsequent to the Rome visit, under the tutelage of Allan Ramsay. He was the son of the parish schoolmaster of Anstruther, went to London as a young man, and about 1765 was employed as assistant by his fellow-countryman Ramsay. After his removal to Edinburgh he was appointed painter to the Prince of Wales in Scotland, a "lift" in life due probably to Ramsay's influence in the Court circles in London. Examples of his work in the National Gallery of Scotland show him to have been a very capable portraitist, but lacking the elegance of Ramsay's handling.

When Raeburn entered Martin's studio, genius may be said to have met the respectable commonplace : a couple that rarely harmonize in this sublunar sphere.

Martin was a man of forty and in his prime when Raeburn, a youth of twenty, was introduced to him. The studio was in St. James's Square, a somewhat dingy quarter to-day, but quite a pleasant, albeit windy, suburban residential district in

the time of Raeburn. It is situated at the east end of Princes Street, where it shelters behind the Register House, a notable Adam edifice. Andrew Geddes, the well-known Scottish painter and etcher, had his studio at No. 7 St. James's Square, in 1808. A more famous figure walked its planestanes in 1787, in which year Robert Burns lodged at No. 2 (a common stair now numbered as 30).

The story of the connexion between Martin and Raeburn opens happily, but the *dénouement* seems to have been somewhat unsavoury : the elusive demon of jealousy stepped in and brought about a severance. Raeburn, however, was too big a man to indulge in the nursing of pretty meannesses : his great-grandson's allusion to the incident makes that factor clear. Martin received the youth courteously. His condescension and his work delighted and astonished Raeburn so much that he declared in later life, when his own name and fame were deservedly high, that "the kind words of Martin are still in my ears and his paintings before me." The elder man lent the youth pictures to copy, and assisted him with such counsel as he was competent to bestow. Raeburn absorbed this desultory instruction, and, so far as it went, it appears to have at least broadened the outlook and strengthened the self-confidence of the aspirant. So we gather from the statement that "he now touched his miniatures with a bolder hand and they rose in estimation till they were soon in general demand. He usually turned them out at the rate of two a week." So great became the demand for these miniatures that he found it impossible to attend to business, and an arrangement was made with his master, Mr. Gilliland, whereby the latter received part of

Raeburn's earnings from miniature-painting and dispensed with his attendance at the booth.

Another important result emerged from his contact with Martin. It gave him the impetus to break with the confinement of miniature, and indulge in the freedom and force of painting on life-size canvas. Commissions for both styles of art became numerous, and the good folk of Edinburgh were beginning to talk of the young man Raeburn. Then came the opportunity for the evil genius of the green-eyed god. Martin may have recognized the advent of a possible rival. He limited his assistance to the lending of pictures for copying purposes, but refused instruction in either drawing or the preparation of colours. We need not suppose that this dog-in-the-manger attitude had much effect upon the younger man : his mental equipment was too fine, and native aptitude soon taught him the secret of the trade.

Then came the final rupture when Martin is alleged to have accused Raeburn of selling copies made from his work. It seems incredible that an artist in the position of Martin would condescend to such an action ; but the tradition is persistent, and it is possible that something of that nasty nature had occurred to sever finally the relationship of the two artists. Raeburn now took the plunge. He relinquished the practice of miniature production and, says his relative, "formed something like a studio or small gallery and commenced working in life size." Henceforth we can trace through a series of works, the dates of which are at least approximately known, his gradual advance from the state of pupilage to the comparative facility he had attained when he crossed the Alps.

CHAPTER III

EARLY PORTRAITS : HOME LIFE

RAEBURN was a youth of twenty years when he launched his barque on the then rather drumly stream of Scottish art. According to the belief of the self-sufficient pedants, he was singularly ill-equipped for the voyage. He had not any training, but he had the more precious gift of fresh outlook and individual expression. As we saw, Martin had declined to initiate him into the secrets of the technical side of the profession; the preparation of colours, composition and execution, the values and the tonalities, the element of atmosphere, and so on, had all to be discovered and applied, as Cunningham says, "according to the rules of art as taught in the academies. . . . Raeburn had to make experiments and drudge to acquire what belongs to the mechanical labour and not to the Genius of Art." Perhaps this was a blessing in disguise. Had he undergone academic training his inherent originality and freshness would inevitably have been blunted, possibly permanently injured. The trammels of the rules and regulations of academic convention are not favourable to genius, but admittedly they function usefully with respectable mediocrity.

The mentality of Raeburn was far removed from the mediocre. His was the supreme endowment of genius. That factor explains at once the immediate success and magnificence of his step from

the niggling niceties of the ivory to the freedom and breadth of the canvas. It was a daring move, yet even in his earliest portraits we find him handling the medium with the easy assurance and skill of training and experience. He received encouragement from many friends when he embarked upon the career of portrait painter. His employer, Gilliland—surely a prince among employers—as we saw, exerted himself enthusiastically on behalf of his apprentice; Professor Duncan had been profoundly impressed with the young man's talents; and in John Clerk, of Eldin, Raeburn found another *fidus Achates*. We do not know very much about Raeburn's private character. Unlike his English contemporary, Joseph Farington, R.A., he did not indulge in the "Diary habit," and "he kept no accounts." So said Sir Walter Armstrong in his monumental work on Raeburn; but Mr. James Greig, in his excellent *Connoisseur* monograph, shows conclusively in the following letter that Raeburn did keep accounts. It is addressed to the Earl of Hardwicke by H. D. Dickie, a writer to the signet and legal adviser to Raeburn.

13 Bank Street, Edinburgh
30th October, 1823

MY LORD

Mr. Raeburn has put into my hands the books of the late Sir Henry Raeburn in order to ascertain the sums due to him. There appears to be due by you 100 gns. for a portrait of your Lordship which Mr. Raeburn will be obliged by your ordering payment of to me who am authorized to receive and discharge the debts due to his father.

H. D. DICKIE.

Obviously, Sir Henry Raeburn kept account books; but they seem to have disappeared. It is conceivable that the volumes

may be in existence, but as Mr. Dickie died in 1839 and, so far as is known, left no descendants, the probability is that these precious records perished long ago. The "Mr. Raeburn" of the letter was the artist's son Henry; he had two sons—Peter, who died young, and Henry, who married and had three sons and two daughters. The second daughter married Sir William Andrew, and one of their sons, William Raeburn Andrew, was the author in 1886 of the first complete life of Sir Henry Raeburn. Sufficient evidence is afforded by the letter quoted to prove that Raeburn, as might have been expected, was a careful man of orderly business habits. What we know of his domestic life emphasizes the latter fact. We may also arrive at a tolerably correct estimate of the man from the character of those with whom he consorted.

It is asserted with some truth that a man is known by his company. "Like draws unto like—hence the significance of the early and life-long friendship between Clerk of Eldin and Raeburn." They became acquainted in their "teens." Clerk was standing for the Bar, while Raeburn was mastering the mysteries of the goldsmith's burin. Socially, Clerk belonged to a much higher circle than that occupied by the goldsmith's apprentice. He came of county people. His grandfather was Sir John Clerk, of Penicuik; his father was John Clerk, author of a celebrated work on naval tactics, in which was embodied a new system of breaking an enemy's line of battle.

Raeburn's friend John Clerk inherited, doubtless, much of his father's acumen. He was born in 1757, the year following Raeburn's birth, and in 1785 was called to the Bar. So great were his intellectual qualities—at a time, too, when the Scottish

Bar boasted of a galaxy of brilliant intellects—that it is said he had at one period nearly half of all the court business in his hands. He was elevated to the Bench in 1823, when he assumed the title of Lord Eldin. Intellectually, Raeburn and he had much in common; but there was a further bond of mutual interest. Clerk was a man of refined taste, a connoisseur in pictures, and a capital painter and etcher. His etchings, over a hundred in number, were published about a century ago by the Bannatyne Club of Edinburgh. Fifty copies were issued, and, judging from the quality of the work contained in the copy in the Glasgow Art Galleries, Clerk might have attained a very high place in black-and-white art had he devoted himself to art instead of to law.

Clerk died a bachelor in his house in Picardy Place on 30th May, 1832. Raeburn's studio was but a bowshot away, at No. 32 York Place, a continuation of Picardy Place to Queen Street, where is to be seen the dignified and spacious Scottish National Portrait Gallery. We may suppose that the young artist and his legal friend were much together. As I have shown, they had many bonds of mutual interest. Another human touch may be added. In their younger days Raeburn called at his friend's lodgings to dine. The couple were not too well off; Clerk doubtless had outrun the parental allowance. The story goes that the landlady served three herrings and three potatoes. "Is that a'?" said Clerk. "Aye, its a' " was the reply. "Bless my sowl, wumman," cried Clerk, "did I no tell ye a gentleman was to dine wi' me and that ye were to get sax herrin' and sax tatties?"

We may assume that Clerk was a good friend. His social

status was exceptional, and doubtless it played its due rôle when the young painter struck out for himself. That his confidence in his own powers was justified finds exemplification in a portrait painted at this period, 1776, that of George Chalmers, of Pittencrieff. It hangs in the Council Chambers of Dunfermline. This work is remarkable as the product of a boy of twenty. The technique and tone display the confidence of a man of much riper years in their broad and painter-like handling, and in this early and immature work we get a prophetic glimpse of Raeburn's wonderful inherent powers of observation. He has transmuted on to the canvas the personality of the douce Scots laird, a *bien* man, and of shrewd and pawky character. The figure is soundly placed, and completing the composition there is seen through the open window a well-painted "bit" of the ruins of Dunfermline Abbey. As the work of a lad of twenty, the canvas would command attention in any exhibition : it is amazing to think that its creator up to this period had been engaged in the relatively mechanical operations of the goldsmith's trade, combined with occasional excursions into the domain of miniature painting, the antithesis in style and treatment of this broad and vigorous visualization. He seems to have passed at one step from the minutiose of the miniature to the massivity of the square touch in oil. The "Chalmers" is a full length.

A study of this portrait enables us to appreciate the confidence of the friends who advised him to relinquish his trade, and become a portrait painter. Events more than justified that confidence. The "George Chalmers" was an earnest of his abilities, and says his great grandson, "commissions were numerous." Then romance lent a hand in the shaping of the

destiny of the young artist. Cunningham tells the story well, although it must be confessed he spins an almost similar yarn around Gainsborough and his divinity.

In 1778, when Raeburn was twenty-two, there called at his studio one day a young lady who desired to sit for her portrait. He instantly remembered having seen her in some of his sketching excursions when he was noting down fine snatches of scenery, "and as the appearance of anything living and lovely gives an additional charm to the landscape, the painter like Gainsborough in similar circumstances, had admitted her readily into the drawing." Can we doubt that she had been impressed by the tall and handsome youth? They must have been tolerably well acquainted with each other's appearance, for the lady lived at Deanhaugh House, almost within a stone-throw of Raeburn's home at Stockbridge. He was an artist, had a studio (in George Street) and an open door to clients. The lady was twelve years the senior of Raeburn and, moreover, she was a widow—"widows, gentlemen, are not usually timorous," said Dickens's one-eyed bagman. At all events, in this case, the lady essayed the adventure, went to the studio and "sat" for her portrait.

Permit the artist's great-grandson to tell the tale :—

"On further acquaintance he (Raeburn) found that besides personal charm she had sensibility and wit. His respect for her did not affect his skill of hand, but rather inspired it. *He fell in love with his sitter and made a very fine portrait of her.* This lady was Countess Leslie, widow of a French Count, daughter of Peter Edgar, the Laird of Bridgelands, and was so much pleased with the skill and likewise with the manners of the artist that within a month or so after this adventure in the studio she gave him her hand in marriage, bestowing at once a most affectionate wife, good sense, and a handsome fortune."

Happy man ! That is the broad sketch, fairly reliable, but a trifle weak in detail. Her former husband was one of the Leslies of Balquhunn, in Aberdeenshire, who had won his title of Count by activities rather opposed to the prosperity of the royal House of Hanover. Doubtless he was wont to pass his glass "ower the water." Let that pass. In or about the year 1768 he married the daughter of Peter Edgar, factor to the Earl of Selkirk and Laird of Bridgelands, Peeblesshire. On his decease she was left with a boy, drowned accidentally, two girls, and considerable property, which included the house and the (subsequently) valuable lands of Deanhaugh on the north bank of the Water of Leith adjoining the existing Dean Bridge of Edinburgh.

The portrait mentioned by the great-grandson, like the portrait of Robert Burns, painted by Raeburn in 1803 for Cadell & Davies, of London, has gone amissing. In Mr. Caw's informative catalogue in the Armstrong, Stevenson & Caw, "Raeburn" one portrait only of Lady Raeburn is mentioned, but it was obviously "painted in the 'nineties" : in the exhaustive list of about 1,000 works of Raeburn, attached to Mr. James Greig's monograph there is no record of the earlier "very fine portrait" painted in 1778. This work is conceivably still in existence. Chance may have preserved it and the probability of discovering it in an odd corner of some baronial hall may serve as a stimulant to seekers after art treasure trove. As a possible incentive towards such a quest, it may be mentioned that the existing portrait of Lady Raeburn brought 8,700 guineas in the Tweedmouth sale at Christie's, in 1905. As against this substantial figure, and indicative of the curiously slow growth

in the appreciation of the art of this master portraitist, it may be mentioned that in 1877, forty-nine of his portraits fetched the modest sum of £6,000, and one of these works was the afore-mentioned portrait of Lady Raeburn. It was in the collection of the late Sir Edward Cassel.

The existing portrait of Lady Raeburn is an excellent certificate to the soundness of the artist's taste. Looking out of the canvas is a typical Scots face, kindly and shrewd. The features are good, rather than pretty: the figure of full habit. The arms and hands suggest that as the daughter of a Peeblesshire bonnet laird she, in her young days, learned both "the milkin" and "the kirnin." Altogether it is a charming portrait of a lady in the late forties, as sensible and good as she was good looking: what we in Scotland would call "a sonsy woman." We know from the best of contemporary evidence that she was a very modest woman. After the honour of knighthood was conferred upon her husband she would on no account allow herself to be called "my lady." Wilkie in the letter to his sister in London, dated 15th September, 1822, describing a little dinner which took place in Raeburn's house the day after he was knighted, remarks that "Lady Raeburn would not allow herself to be called 'my lady,' but was exceedingly hospitable to her guests and pressed them to eat in the good old-fashioned Scottish style.

With his marvellous power of expressing in paint the more subtle notes of human character, Raeburn has visualized for us exactly what Wilkie has so well expressed in words. We know from his great-grandson that the early years at Deanhaugh House—his wife's property—were years of happiness: he enjoyed "the bliss of domestic tranquillity." Tranquil also

was it in the evening of their days. So said one who knew the family intimately in the golden sere and yellow leaf of life. I refer to Mrs. Ferrier, widow of Professor Ferrier, of St. Andrews, and the daughter of Professor John Wilson ("Christopher North"), poet, essayist, and moral philosopher. In the Edinburgh of Raeburn, Wilson was a well-known and highly respected citizen: one of the *litterati* of the golden age in the history of Modern Athens. Raeburn, in 1805, painted "Christopher North" then in the full flood tide of youth. It is a full-length of a tall and vigorous young man in the twenties, garbed in riding costume with his right arm resting on his charger's neck. Seen between the horse's legs are trees and hills over which hangs a mellow sky, a strongly painted work characteristic of what may be called the artist's early middle period. It is the property of the Royal Scottish Academy, and is exhibited in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. To Dr. John Brown, author of "Rab and his Friends" and "Minchmoor," two charming minor Scottish classics, "Christopher North's" daughter gave some most interesting reminiscences of the inner life of Raeburn's household. List to this voice from a long vanished, and pleasant past, of the poet's "lang lang syne, when the simmer days were fine." She is writing about 1870 and telling of events that took place and persons who were living "more than half a century ago."

"I was frequently in my childhood, at St. Bernard's House, on the banks of the Water of Leith, which was in those days green and smooth to the river's edge. This old house was reached by a broad avenue of trees and shrubbery from Ann Street where we (the Wilsons) lived for some years: this would be about 1820. This interesting old house was surrounded by large green fields, a fine orchard of apple and pear

trees, and leading from this was another avenue of old stately elms, part of which still remains with the rookery in St. Bernard's Crescent. On the right of this avenue was a nice old garden, well stocked with hot-houses. In this ancient mansion lived the Raeburn family with whom we were very intimate as children, likewise school companions though there were some years between our ages.

"Sir Henry and Lady Raeburn and their son and his wife with three children comprised the family party at this time. The great portrait painter, as far as I can recollect him, had a very impressive appearance, his full dark lustrous eyes, with ample brow and dark hair, at this time scant. His tall frame had a dignified aspect. *I can well remember him seated in an armchair in the evening at the fireside of the small drawing-room, newspaper in hand, with his family around him.* His usual mode of address to us when we were spending the evenings, while he held out his hand with a kind smile, was : 'Well, my dears, what is your opinion of things in general to-day?'

"These words usually filled us with consternation, and we all huddled together like a flock of scared sheep, vainly attempting some answer by gazing from one to the other; and with what delight and sense of freedom we were led away to be seated at the tea-table, covered with cookies, bread and butter, and jelly ! From this place of security we stole, now and then, a fearful glance at the armchair in which Sir Henry reclined. After tea we were permitted to go away for play to another room : we made as much noise as we liked and generally managed to disturb old Lady Raeburn [the blooming young widow of the far-away studio adventure was now an old woman of seventy-six].

"This old lady was quite a character and *always spoke in broad Scotch*, then common among the old families, now extinct. I can never forget the manner in which we uproarious creatures tormented her, flinging open the door of her snug little room whither she had fled for a little quiet from our incessant provocations and unwearied inventions at amusement, which usually reached the climax of throwing bed pillows at her and nearly smothering her small figure. At this juncture she would rise up and opening the door of a cupboard would bring out of it a magnificent bunch of grapes which she endeavoured to divide among us with these words of entreaty :—

LORD NEWTON

In the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



“ ‘ Hoot, hoot, bairns, here’s some grapes for ye : noo gang awa and behave yerself like gude bairns and dinna deave me ony mair.’

“ For a short time the remedy effected a lull in the storm which at the least hint was ready to set in with renewed vigour. She would then throw out of a wardrobe, shawls, turbans, bonnets, and gear of all sorts and colours, in which we arrayed ourselves to hold our court, Ann Raeburn being very often the Queen.”

Place this simple sketch of Mrs. Ferrier’s alongside of the character of his old friend John Clerk, and we need travel no further in our search after the character of Henry Raeburn. They beat any diary ever penned in their transparently honest statement of the more profound elements whereby we may gauge the character of any man.

As we have seen, marriage not only brought to Raeburn the placid delights of domestic bliss, but it conferred upon him the material comforts and independence which accrue from the possession of “a handsome fortune.” Raeburn was of that higher and gifted type who must work to please themselves, and as they grow abler must become ever severer and more enlightened critics themselves. The six or seven years following his marriage Raeburn spent in the painting of portraits, living quietly at Deanhaugh and working hard in his studio in George Street. During this period he painted many persons of note, enough we are told to make him independent of his wife’s fortune.

He went to Rome in 1785. It is difficult to identify the portraits executed before that visit. We know definitely the date of “George Chalmers of Pittencrieff.” In 1780–81 there was painted the full length and ambitious group of “Mrs. Ferguson, of Raith, and her two Children”: and also in the famous

Raith collection (Lord Novar is the descendant and representative of that old Scottish family whose ancestral home is at Raith House, Kirkcaldy, in Fifeshire) are the three-quarter length of "Wm. Ferguson and his Third Son" and "Major Buchanan," painted probably before the visit to Italy. These works display a technique and composition differing from and infinitely abler than any of the productions of Raeburn's predecessors. In these early canvases we see a breadth of treatment that is remarkable for a man in the middle twenties. The painting is direct: broad, flat surfaces and the precise square touch that were to play such a primary rôle in the splendour of the canvas of after years. It is true, no doubt, that the colour is thin and the craftsmanship lacking in the vivacity of his later work, and we miss the finer shades of modelling and the blocking out the planes of the face with almost sculptural relief, as in the magnificent stateliness of treatment in the later "Lord Newton" which adorns the walls of the National Gallery of Scotland. A glance at our illustration will reveal the Olympian character of the handling of that great example of British portraiture. However, the sheer ability and directness that emphatically characterizes these early works make a powerful appeal: certainly their dominant and impressive qualities appealed to Sir Joshua Reynolds who saw them when, in 1785, Raeburn and his wife sojourned in London on their way to Rome.

CHAPTER IV

LONDON : ITALY : AULD REEKIE

THE finely gifted president of the Royal Academy was advanced in years, and at the height of his distinction and fame when Raeburn, a young man of twenty-nine, called upon him in London. The great engravers of the age had reproduced many of his works, and Raeburn would be familiar, doubtless, with the magnificent mezzotints of Mac-Ardell, Turner and others. It is tolerably clear that in such works as the afore-mentioned "Mrs Ferguson, of Raith, and her two Children" Raeburn derived some inspiration from the method of chiaroscuro practised by Reynolds and emphasized in the mezzos of his paintings.

At all events, the young Scottish artist, with characteristic thoughtfulness and foresight, called upon the artist, who was acknowledged generally as the head of his profession. He had taken examples of his portraiture with him, and these he showed to Reynolds, gaining, at once, it is said, the favour and friendship of one whom his biographers describe as "the most discerning and cautious of men." His life and his work demonstrate that Reynolds was a shrewd and keen observer of human nature, and we may assume that in young Raeburn and his work he detected those higher traits of character and genius with which he was endowed and which, in subsequent years, raised him to a pinnacle of fame second only, perhaps, to Reynolds himself. It

is conceivable that during the London stay Raeburn may have worked in the president's studio. Cunningham, writing almost at the period, and able to secure definite knowledge on the subject, says, "he never had the honour nor the advantage of studying under him and, indeed, if he had been admitted to paint in his studio such was the care with which the president guarded the golden mysteries of his art that Raeburn would have gained nothing save what his own eyes could glean."

It is unnecessary to labour the point, it is sufficient to know that to the young Scot the great painter was unfailingly kind. What more concrete example of generous treatment could one desire than the words spoken and the offer made at the adieux?—"Young man," said Reynolds, "I know nothing about your circumstances, young painters are seldom rich, but if money be necessary for your studies abroad, say so, and you shall not want it." Generosity of that type postulates much more than a passing acquaintance. Indeed, it lends a colour of truth to the belief that—*pace* Cunningham—Raeburn did spend some time painting in the president's studio. As we know, Raeburn was a comparatively rich man, thanks no less to his successful portrait painting as to the handsome fortune of his wife. Naturally the generous offer was declined, but he accepted gladly from Reynolds letters of introduction to the most eminent artists and men of letters in Rome, and accompanied by his wife took his departure from London to Italy. In after years Raeburn always mentioned with respect the name of Reynolds and related often how he counselled him to study at Rome and worship Michael Angelo in the Sistine Chapel.

Raeburn and his wife spent some eighteen months in Rome,

and we may suppose the artist to some extent followed the excellent advice of Reynolds and studied keenly the work of the great men of the Italian Renaissance. So far as is known he kept no diaries, nor did he write any letters during his stay in the classic capital. Little, therefore, of a precise character is known regarding that brief period in his career. It has been said that while in Italy he indulged occasionally in sculpture. That he did so is conceivable. We know that he sometimes practised modelling, and of that phase of his versatility it is asserted there has been preserved a fine medallion of himself. It is wrought in the familiar Tassie medium and very much after that famous medallist's style. In the monograph on "James and William Tassie" this medallion is stated to be "regarded as modelled by his hand" and that his son Henry Raeburn "believes that it was executed by the painter himself." The writer, J. M. Gray, concludes "it is probably safe to assume that we have here the single existing example of Sir Henry's plastic art." It bears the title "H. Raeburn, 1792," and is not signed with the usual "Tassie F." or the capital "T." However, these factors are not conclusive: there are many unsigned Tassies. It must be confessed, however, that the breadth of treatment suggests a pronouncedly vigorous artistry and it is possible that the medallion may be a Raeburn.

What we do know is that he had introductions to Gavin Hamilton, a Scottish artist, a Lanarkshire man and (says the writer of "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk") nearly related to the Hamilton of Murdieston; and to another Scotsman, James Byres of Tonley, Aberdeenshire, described in private letters of the time as "The Cicerone." These were useful men to know,

distinguished and respected in the Rome of the brilliant society that crowded its palaces and salons during a period of exceptional literary and social brilliance throughout the capitals of Europe. Hamilton was versatile, an artist accomplished in the technical side of his profession and the first Scottish artist who gained the gold medal of the Academy of St. Luke, at Rome (as we saw earlier, David Allan was the second Scot to achieve that honour with the well-known sketch, "The Origin of Painting," now in the Scottish National Gallery), an able writer, a gift that found concrete demonstration in his exhaustive sketch of Italian Art from Leonardo to the Carracci—*Gavianus Hamilton, Schola Italica Picturae, Romae*, 1773—with engravings by Cunego, who also engraved Allan's "Origin of Painting." Of similar refined tastes was his fellow countryman, James Byres, referred to by Winckelmann in his "History of Ancient Art" as "a connoisseur in architecture at Rome." He deserves the grateful remembrance of collectors from the fact that he acquired from the Barberini family the famous Portland Vase, sold subsequently by him to Sir William Hamilton for a thousand pounds, and now one of the most precious items in the great collection at the British Museum.

Under the highly capable ægis of these Scottish men of taste, young Raeburn must have seen and learned much. In after years Raeburn often and gratefully acknowledged his indebtedness to certain advice tendered him by Byres, never to paint anything without having the object before him. That subtle artistic seed fell on fruitful ground, and of its sowing and harvesting, W. D. McKay, R.S.A., made the profoundly significant comment, "it gave the bent to a lifetime and direction to

future generations.” That is high praise, but given as the considered judgment of one of the most accomplished of living Scottish artists, it commands respect. It is homologated freely by the leading art critics who have made a special study of the work of Raeburn. R. A. M. Stevenson remarks that upon his return from Italy “he sets to work with fully-matured power”; Sir William Armstrong notes “the awakened ambition” and, speaking generally, the greater achievement; James L. Caw that “he perfected his technique, became a more accomplished draughtsman, acquired a more assured touch, and attained a bolder use of colour”; and Mr. James Greig says as emphatically “his knowledge of structure was greater, his hand more certain, and the problems of light and shade as suggested perhaps by the Bolognese painters added interest to his essays. In short, he came back from the Eternal City the best-equipped artist in Scotland of that time.” To these more outstanding tributes may be added gossipy Allan Cunningham’s comment that “with all the advantages which two years study in Rome and the sight of so many noble works of art could give, he returned to Scotland, and in the year 1787 set up his easel in George Street.”

The Raeburns are said to have returned to Scotland in the early summer of 1787. Doubtless the artist would be welcomed warmly by his fellow-members of The Cape Club, one of those curious associations of douce citizens and wits which lent a pungent savour to the convivialia of eighteenth-century Edinburgh. This club aspired to a refined and classical character and comprised amongst its numerous members many men of talent as well as of private worth. Raeburn, Runciman, and other painters were members, as were also Robert Fergusson,

HENRY RAEBURN ON A GREY PONY

Study for the Portrait painted about 1785

In the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



the poet, and his biographer, Thomas Sommers. Raeburn was a full-blooded "hefty" Scot, a hard worker, yet not averse to the social round and the pleasure and health to be derived from fishing, golf, and archery. Like Burns, he was fond of making pilgrimages to his country's haunts of ancient peace and war, and to wander by waterways redolent of legend and romance. Memorable is the account left us of an expedition into Fifeshire, accompanied by Sir Walter Scott, Miss Edgeworth, Sir Adam Ferguson, and Lord Chief Commissioner Adam. The friends explored the venerable ruins of St. Andrews, of Pittenweem, and other relics of antiquity. Raeburn revelled in the objectives of that pilgrimage and "contributed much to the hilarity of the party."

The Edinburgh to which he returned in 1787 was a convivial place. There, as elsewhere, during the closing years of the eighteenth century, the worship of Bacchus held supreme sway. No rank, class, or profession formed an exception to the rule; dissipation prevailed to an extent that seems incredible. Scott has drawn with unerring hand the scenes and the vinous atmosphere of the period in the "High Jinks" of Counsellor Pleydell in "Guy Mannering." Burns, who was in Edinburgh in 1786-87 was introduced to the Crochallan Club, a body of worthies and wits which met in the Anchor Close Tavern, near the Cross. He was taken there by his printer, William Smellie (he printed the Edinburgh edition of Burns's poems) a talented man and author of the "Philosophy of Natural History."

Raeburn knew, and was known by the jovial brethren of an age that seems to have almost deified the oft-quoted quatrain in which the English poet Shenstone bids us sigh to think how

often mankind finds "the warmest welcome at an inn." We can see them to-day in that wonderful gallery of character which Raeburn has left to posterity; "portraits" said R.L.S. in "Virginibus Puerisque," "racier than many anecdotes and more complete than many a volume of sententious memoirs." Lively, rugged faces, brimful of the zest of life with, sometimes, the nose combining somehow the dignity of a beak with the good nature of a bottle. Look at our illustration of that amazing canvas, the portrait of Lord Newton. He was equally remarkable as a bacchanal and as a lawyer. Chambers in his "Traditions of Edinburgh" tells us that Lord Newton "considered himself as only the better fitted for business that he had previously imbibed six bottles of claret, and one of his clerks declared that the best paper he ever knew His Lordship dictate was done after a debauch where that amount of liquor had fallen to his share." It was of him that the famous story is told of a client calling one day at four o'clock and being surprised at finding His Lordship at dinner. On remarking to the servant that he understood five o'clock to be his dinner hour the footman replied, "Oh, but, sir, that is his *yesterday's dinner*."

Raeburn was welcomed back to his native city not only because of his temperate social qualities, but because his fellow-citizens recognized and were proud of his unmistakable genius as an artist. Perhaps among those who did not extend their heartiest felicitations was his quondam master, Martin. It is said by Cunningham, and has been often repeated, that Martin declared sarcastically "the lad in George Street painted better before he went to Rome." It is possible to understand the chagrin that prompted the criticism, assuming that it was

uttered, but it bears a curious resemblance to the story told regarding Hudson's remark to Reynolds; "By G——, Reynolds, you don't paint so well as when you left England." It is permissible to entertain doubts as to the accuracy of the tale and to credit Martin with more generous feelings; in any case, Raeburn, in later life (as we might expect), spoke often and kindly of Martin's kindness to him in his youth, and it is pleasant to leave the affair at the latter charitable angle.

Raeburn was now in the very prime of his physical powers, a young man of thirty-two, healthy, high-spirited, and—important matter—financially care-free. He had been abroad and seen and studied the great masters of the continent. His mental outlook was broadened, and his artistic gift more ripened and assured by these experiences. Triumph beckoned to him, and he was ready and able to respond.

Raeburn's early friend and patron, Professor Andrew Duncan, was one of the first of the citizens to give concrete shape to the welcome home. In the professor's "Tribute" already referred to, he mentions that the Royal Medical Society was in some degree instrumental in giving Raeburn a favourable introduction to public notice. Immediately on his return the society gave him a commission to paint the portrait of one of the founders, William Inglis, the "chief restorer of the Ludi Apollinares at Edinburgh, games annually celebrated on the Links of Leith at which there is an admirable combination of healthy exercise with social mirth." The result must have been pleasing to the brethren, for a second commission followed rapidly, the portrait being the president of the society, Alexander Wood, a well-known city surgeon. A third portrait was at

once ordered, that of Dr. Duncan himself for the Royal Public Dispensary, of which he was the founder; it is now in the possession of the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh. We are told by his great-grandson that these three canvases attracted very considerable attention in the higher social circles, and to that statement may be given the fullest credit. It is true that Raeburn was still far from the full compass of his powers, but, even so, that trio of works must have struck a new and refreshing note to a generation accustomed to the stiff and precise methods of his predecessors and contemporaries. His work had a breadth and vigour hitherto lacking, which conferred upon it the fresh charm of an original note.

That this factor was recognized and appreciated is postulated by the commissions received from Town and Gown to paint portraits of Lord Provost Thomas Elder, Dr. William Robertson, Principal of the University, and the celebrated Dr. Adam Ferguson, Professor of Political and Moral Philosophy, in whose house the year previous to the painting of the portrait had taken place the historic meeting between Burns, then in the roseate flush of fame, and Scott, a boy of fifteen, but steeped in the legend and lore of the makars.

Some years—not many—were to elapse before Raeburn painted his famous “Dr. Nathaniel Spens,” and “Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster,” works upon which W. D. McKay, R.S.A., bestows the fine tribute, “either can take rank with the great portraits of any age or school.” That is high praise; those who have been privileged to look upon that couple of masterpieces will homologate gladly this rare tribute paid by one artist to the accomplishment of a brother of the brush. The “Spens” hangs

in the Royal Archer's Hall, Edinburgh, and the "Sinclair" belongs to the collection of Sir Archibald Sinclair, Bart., and is now on loan at the Scottish National Gallery. Mr. Caw says of the "Sinclair" it is "splendidly audacious and yet highly dignified." It was painted in 1795, the "Spens" in 1791.

During the four years which separated the "Adam Ferguson" and the "Spens" the works which left Raeburn's easel show a steady and marked development in technical skill and arrangement. The touch is fuller and the pigment more juicy than in the pre-Italian period; the execution all over, displays the increasing ease and fluency which are the sure fruits of practice and experience. That interval of a quartette of years, however, witnessed the production of several remarkable canvases, notably in the group of portraits painted for the Fergusons of Raith, Kirkcaldy, and the Clerks of Penicuik, Midlothian. I venture to think that from these groups two pictures may be selected which are of outstanding quality—"William Ferguson of Kilrie," the third son of William Ferguson, of Raith; and "Sir John and Lady Clerk of Penicuik."

It always seems to me that Raeburn was particularly happy in his delineation of boyhood, of children generally. As an example take our reproduction of the "Boy with Rabbit." Raeburn was a big-hearted man. The essence of his finely attuned nature, generous and sympathetic, must have gone out to the sweet charm of boyhood and girlhood. That tender trait in his character finds loving demonstration in many canvases: in that of his own son "Henry, on a Grey Pony": the manly little fellow of the McCrae group of mother and children: in the sweet wee girl so charmingly shy and the bonnie boy of

"Mrs. Ferguson, of Raith and her Children"; in the baby girl Eleanor Carmichael (collection, Sir T. D. Gibson Carmichael) fondling a dog; and in the vivacious and absolutely boyish figure of Willie Ferguson with the hair tumbling over the soft boyish cheek, and the light striking upon and emphasizing the youthful freedom and elegance of the widely-opened shirt neck. A more mellow charm clings to the "Sir John and Lady Clerk." It is a most effective grouping and design in which Sir John's *chapeau* plays a prominent part, and light and shade command attention and admiration. In the Raith group, also, is a full-length of "General Sir Ronald Ferguson," nobly conceived and brimful of life and movement, suggestive, somehow, of the later and greater and more searching "Nathaniel Spens."

Other characteristic portraits of that period in which can be traced the steadily maturing gift of the artist are "Bailie Galloway," a magistrate of Edinburgh and treasurer of the famous old Edinburgh School known as George Watson's (in the possession of the Merchant Company, Edinburgh), and "Mrs. Campbell of Ballimore" (in the National Gallery, Edinburgh) a richly toned canvas in which a portly and pleasant looking dame is resting comfortably on a garden seat. The lady is in the early autumn of life, and the autumnal tints of the foliage harmonize well not only with the general colour scheme, but with the more profound suggestion of the passing years.

The year in which Raeburn returned from Italy, 1787, and in Allan Cunningham's homely phrase, "set up his easel in George Street," is the year rendered memorable in Scottish literary history by the visit to Edinburgh of Robert Burns. The poet travelled from his Ayrshire farm of Mossgiel on horseback,

leaving on 27th November, 1786 and arriving in the capital on the evening of the next day, 28th November. In October of 1787 he was resident, as mentioned earlier, at St. James's Square in the house of William Cruickshank, one of the teachers of the High School. From first to last his sojourn in Edinburgh covered a period of sixteen months during which he made excursions to the Borders, the Highlands, and the West Country. The drawing-rooms of the city were thrown open to him, and he met, talked with, and walked with all the outstanding figures in literary and legal Edinburgh—Lord Newton, Harry Erskine, the celebrated advocate and wit, son of the Earl of Buchan, Dr. Hugh Blair, Patrick Miller of Dalswinton, Professor Dugald Stewart, and so on. The poet as was to be expected, fraternized with the artistic fraternity and was friendly with Nasmyth.

It is to Nasmyth that we are indebted for the engaging portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh. Alongside is the drawing of the head of the poet done in red chalk by Archibald Skirving, a well-known artist: a *bon vivant* in the Edinburgh of the Burns period. We know Burns sat to Nasmyth: the artist's son, James Nasmyth, the celebrated engineer, in his own "Life" edited by Smiles, says :—

"The poet had a strange aversion to sit for his portrait though often urgently requested to do so. But when at my father's studio, Burns at last consented the portrait was rapidly painted."

We know that Burns never *sat* to Raeburn, but it is impossible to believe that they *never met*. They had scores of friends in common and they mixed in the same social circles. The painter must often have heard of the wonderful man from Ayrshire,

MRS. WILLIAM URQUHART

Painted about 1815

In the Glasgow Art Gallery



and it is incredible to suppose that men of the artistic and social temperament of Raeburn and Skirving would not desire to see and talk with of a man of obviously similar fine æsthetic gifts. Skirving's exquisitely sensitive drawing is much more than a mere copy of Nasmyth's oil, it is inspired primarily, I would say, by close personal observation of the subject's mental as well as physical attributes. While deeply thankful to Nasmyth for the rare gift he has left us, we may at the same time regret that the mightier and keener brush of Raeburn had not been employed to portray the features of the Scottish poet. It is possible that the secret is to be found in the "strange aversion" to sit for his portrait, revealed to us in the statement I have quoted from the life of the son of the artist Nasmyth.

Raeburn, however, did paint a portrait of Burns. In a catalogue issued by William Brown, bookseller, Edinburgh, in 1903 (No. 146) there was offered for sale :—

"Three signed Autograph Letters of Sir Henry Raeburn, dated 14th November, 1803 : 11th December, 1803 : and 22nd February, 1804 : also a bill drawn by Sir H. Raeburn upon Messrs. Cadell and Davies (London) for £21, in payment of a portrait of Burns which he painted from the original portrait by Nasmyth, and the shipping company's receipt for the case containing the portrait which was sent from Leith."

The last-mentioned document is in the following terms :—

"Union Shipping Company's Office,

"Leith, November 30th, 1803.

"addressed to Cadell & Davies, London.

"York Place, Edinburgh.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I enclose you a receipt for a case containing Burns's portrait, and I have no doubt you will get it soon and safe, and I flatter myself with

the hope of its meeting with your approbation, than which, I assure you, nothing will give me more pleasure.

“ I have twenty guineas for a portrait the size of Burns’s. I do not wish you to remit the money to me, for, as I have money to pay in London, I shall, after receiving your permission, draw upon you for the amount. I am, with much respect, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

“ HENRY RAEURN.”

From the letters of 14th November, 1803, and 22nd February, 1804, I give the following extracts:—

“ I have finished a copy of Burns the Poet from the original portrait painted by Mr. Nasmyth. I have shown it to Mr. Cunningham, who thinks it very like him.”

“ Nothing could be more gratifying to me than the approbation you (Cadell & Davies) expressed of the copy I made for you of Robert Burns.”

This portrait the publishers intended to have engraved for an edition of Burns’s works, as a Cadell advertisement of 1823 has it, “elegantly printed in 4 vols. 8vo *with the portrait of the author from an original picture by Raeburn.*” The edition referred to was issued, but, strange to say, the portrait printed is “an engraving after Nasmyth, by W. F. Fry.” The “original picture by Raeburn” was not engraved nor was it issued in any other process. Why, we do not know, and the question still unsolved is, where has Raeburn’s portrait gone? Presumably it was in the possession of the publishers in 1823, the year of the issue of the above-quoted advertisement. Three portraits of Burns have come under my inspection at the Glasgow Art Galleries, and in each case the owner was emphatic that his picture was “the missing Raeburn.” May I add that in each case the claim could not possibly be sustained? This precious canvas may be still in existence. We cannot say, but what we can say with

confidence is that its discovery would be an event bordering upon the sensational. The portrait of Burns in the National Portrait Gallery, London, is a replica by Nasmyth, but it lacks the vigour and intellectual manliness of the original in Edinburgh. It is said to have been brushed over by Raeburn, no doubt at Nasmyth's request.

There are in existence at least six authentic portraits by Raeburn of Burns's great literary contemporary, Sir Walter Scott. As recorded in Mr. James Caw's catalogue they are—the Tweedmouth portrait of Scott as a youth, bought in at the Russell Sale of 1863 for three pounds five shillings, at the same collector's sale of 1884 it went at one hundred and fifty guineas and at the Tweedmouth Sale, June 3rd, 1905, it advanced to one thousand guineas; the (Duke of) Buccleuch portrait painted in 1808 for Constable the publisher, engraved in mezzo by C. Turner, and repeatedly in line on a smaller scale: a replica of the above in the possession of Mrs. Maxwell Scott painted in 1809; the portrait painted in 1822-23 for Lord Montague, now in the collection of the Earl of Home; another portrait painted 1822-23, in the Arthur Sanderson collection, engraved in stipple by Walker and reproduced many times on a smaller scale in other processes; and a replica of the above formerly owned by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

At one period, Scott appears to have had doubts regarding Raeburn's work. In reply to a letter from the Duke of Buccleuch asking him to sit to Raeburn for a portrait, Scott writes on 15th April, 1819, "I hesitate a little about Raeburn, unless your Grace is quite determined. He has . . . twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much to

try Allan who is a man of real genius and has made one or two glorious portraits though his predilection is to the historical branch of art." Obviously Scott's taste in art matters was not impeccable; the Allan referred to was Sir William Allan, the historical painter.

Scott and Raeburn were great friends. The artist spent many happy days at Abbotsford, and the last occasion upon which he used his brush was on a portrait of Walter Scott. In Scott's "Journal" under date 16th June, 1826, we read: "I got yesterday a present of two engravings from Sir Henry Raeburn's portrait of me, which, poor fellow, was the last he ever painted and certainly not the worst." This is the Montague portrait, a magnificent canvas, familiar to millions by reproduction. Of it Dr. John Brown said it is a picture of a "bluff man of the world, with his pleasant mouth that has a *burr* on it"; and Lockhart wrote "A massive strong likeness heavy at first, but which grows into favour upon better acquaintance—the eyes very deep and fine." That is correct. It shows us an exceptional man.

CHAPTER V

THE HIGHLAND GROUP

RAEBURN'S first really great triumph may be allotted to the year 1791, when he was commissioned by the Royal Company of Archers to paint one of the prominent members, Dr. Nathaniel Spens, a well-known Edinburgh citizen, and from 1794 to 1796, President of the Royal College of Physicians. In this portrait the artist surpassed all his former efforts. It may be assumed that the picturesque old-world garb and its buirdly wearer proved to Raeburn a highly attractive and stimulating combination. Further, he was keenly interested in the ancient sport of archery, as he was in golf, and indeed, in all forms of manly exercise. He was inspired to give of his best, and the result was a masterpiece in colour, composition, and draughtsmanship. The fine delineation of the old archer in his white waistcoat and trews, and tartan coat, adorns the Archers' Hall in Edinburgh. We can imagine that on its completion it would create a sensation; nothing like it had been seen before in the northern capital. It was the first of Raeburn's "Olympians."

A second followed in 1795 when there left his easel that magnificent *tour de force*, "Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster," one of the earliest of what may be termed his "Highland group," a series in which he depicted with rare sympathy and almost a titanic force the striking, sometimes dour personalities of the

chieftains of the old Highland clans. On to that canvas Raeburn lured the very atmosphere of a vanishing past and a race of men who, in garb, at least, lend to it a romantic touch that never fails to charm the beholder.

On the walls of the Scottish National Gallery there is a glorious collection of the art of Raeburn. We see him there as he can be seen nowhere else, at his best and mightiest, and of his best we can say truly and without fear of contradiction it is *nulli secundus* !

Amongst that magnificent Edinburgh group, "Sinclair of Ulbster" nods across the gallery to another mountain chief, "Macdonell of Glengarry." Both men are typical of the time and race from which they sprang; as depicted by Raeburn, gallant, athletic figures imbued with the peculiar grace and dignity associated always with the clansmen of the north. It is said that Macdonell was the prototype of Fergus McIvor of "Waverley." Scott's word picture of McIvor might be used to describe Raeburn's painting of Macdonell, "Above the middle size, and finely proportioned, the Highland dress which he wore set off his person to great advantage. His countenance was decidedly Scottish with all the peculiarities of the northern physiognomy, but yet had so little of its harshness that it would have been pronounced in any country, extremely handsome. The martial air of the bonnet with a single eagle's feather as a distinction added much to the manly appearance of his head." Could we desire a more accurate description of the Raeburn portrait? (See plate.)

This fine full-length of "Colonel Alastair Macdonell of Glengarry" was painted in 1812, when Raeburn was reaching

the height of his great powers. It was exhibited in the Royal Academy in that year, and its exhibition was followed by Raeburn's election as an Associate. In 1815 came the full membership of the R.A. Cunningham's suggestion that Raeburn "was uneasy" because academic honours had not come his way is not borne out by the tone of the letter written in 1814 to "one of the brethren since become a distinguished member." It is an independent note that is struck in the following :—

"I observe what you say respecting the election of an R.A.; but what am I to do here. They know I am on their list, if they choose to elect me without solicitation it will be the more honourable to me, and I will think the more of it; but if it can only be obtained by means of solicitation and canvassing I must give up all hopes of it for I think it would be unfair to employ these means." He rejoices "in the worthy president's increasing reputation" and asks his correspondent to "write and tell me what artists are about." It may be mentioned here that as his diploma work he sent his own portrait (see plate) a rare canvas that now forms a magnificent centre in the Raeburn room in the Scottish National Gallery. The regulations of the Royal Academy debar personal portraits, so he sent subsequently the "Boy with Rabbit" (see frontispiece), a painting of singular charm; in tone and technique brimful of ripe and rich experience. There is a note of pathos in the thought that the subject was his deaf and dumb step-grandson.

The "Macdonell," in my opinion, is the supreme achievement in Raeburn's long series of portraits of Highlanders—he painted fifty-two persons owning the prefix "Mac" and numerous members of the clans Robertson, Sinclair, and Stewart. Another

remarkable canvas is "The Macnab," of 1802, of which Sir Thomas Lawrence is reported to have said it was "the best representation of a human being he had ever seen." It is undoubtedly a magnificent canvas, grand in conception, and masterly in technique. It is instinct with abilities above and beyond any but those conferred upon the most highly gifted of artists. Equally so is the "Sinclair" a great accomplishment. Contrasting the latter with the "Macdonell" as they confront one another in the Edinburgh Gallery one must admit that in dramatic force and bravura of craftsmanship the "Sinclair" bears away the palm; but to me it is lacking in the quiet impressive dignity, in the suggestion of latent and even terrible human strength, and in the profoundly subtle atmosphere which lends what might be called a majesty of execution, a breath of the permanent, to the "Macdonell" canvas.

The year which witnessed the painting of the brilliant "Sir John Sinclair" is memorable also because of Raeburn's removal to the large and spacious studio which he had built at York Place, still standing and numbered 32. About the same period and following upon the passing of his brother William, Raeburn and his family transferred their establishment to St. Bernard's (the property of the deceased brother) from Deanhaugh, an easy transference as the two houses were in the same neighbourhood. In a former chapter I quoted the delightful sketch by Mrs. Ferrier of the homely life of the artist's family at "the interesting old house of St. Bernard's." Let me supplement it by Cunningham's intimate sketch :—

"Though his painting rooms were in York Place, his dwelling-house was at St. Bernard's, near Stockbridge, overlooking the Water of Leith,

a romantic place. The steep banks were then finely wooded, the garden grounds varied and beautiful and all the seclusion of the country could be enjoyed without the remoteness. The motions of the artist were as regular as those of a clock. He rose at seven during summer, took breakfast about eight with his wife and children, walked up to his great room in 32 York Place, now occupied by Colvin Smith, R.S.A. (1795-1875) and was ready for a sitter by nine : and of sitters he had for many years not fewer than three or four a day. To these he gave an hour and a half each. He seldom kept a sitter more than two hours unless the person happened to be gifted with more than common talents : he then felt himself happy and never failed to detain the party till the arrival of a new sitter."

An admirable sketch and like that of Mrs. Ferrier's, a revelation of a singularly well-balanced man.

The studio in York Place—quite adjacent to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery—is now transformed into a suite of offices. The memory of its famous builder and earliest resident is recalled happily to the passing stranger, by a sculptured and inscribed palette which adorns the façade. Raeburn House, as it is called, consists of a sunk story for domestic accommodation, a ground-floor containing the painting rooms, with a story above formed into one fine gallery fifty-five feet long, thirty-five feet wide and forty feet high lighted from the roof. So says Cunningham and he has been followed by later writers. Mr. Caw who made a careful examination of the building is inclined to doubt "honest Allan's" description. He points out that the top flat consists of a number of rather low-roofed rooms and "the painting room is quite obviously that on the first floor," wherein it is almost certain were held the exhibitions of the Society of Artists.

Raeburn was intimately associated with this artistic body,

and he was one of "the leading artists resident in Edinburgh" who had resolved to have an annual exhibition of their works. The opening show was held in 1808 in Raeburn's fine gallery at York Place. In his "Reminiscences" Lord Cockburn refers to it as the most gratifying occurrence of the period and as one that "proclaimed the dawn of modern Scottish art." Among the pictures exhibited on that auspicious occasion the catalogue records three by George Watson (1767-1837—first President of the Royal Scottish Academy, founded in 1826) three by Alex. Nasmyth (1758-1840); two by William Douglas (1780-1832); one a portrait of Mrs. Boswell of Auchinleck; three by Alex. Carse; "The Earl of Buchan crowning Master Gattie," by W. H. Lizars (1788-1859). In the succeeding year, 1809, the catalogue mentions five works by Raeburn, including his "Walter Scott"; three by George Watson; three by Thomson of Duddingston (1778-1840); and one by John Watson (afterwards Sir J. Watson-Gordon 1788-1864) who carried on in brilliant manner the Scottish school of portraiture after Raeburn's death. During five exhibitions between 1809 and 1813, the Society saved almost £600, but not being restricted by their laws from dissolving at any time, the sum amassed appears to have proved tempting, and after a stormy discussion, it was divided among the exhibitors. Raeburn disapproved strongly of this strange proceeding. That gratifying fact is made sufficiently clear in a letter written by Sir Henry in support of the movement to form a Scottish Academy. The letter was first published by Mr. Caw. It is dated from York Place 24th December, 1822. Referring to the exhibitions of the Society of Artists, Raeburn remarks :—

“It will probably be in your recollection that a few years ago the artists here had several Exhibitions which were made by way of experiment and which succeeded beyond their expectations. By their Exhibitions they had realized a fund amounting to between £500 and £600, and at that time it was the intention of those whose labours had perhaps contributed most to the success of the Exhibition, to apply for a Charter and have themselves formed into a Corporate Body.

“But, unfortunately for their purpose they had at the first outset been guilty of a great oversight. That they might not seem to act upon a system of exclusion, they had admitted too many into the Society whose works were of little importance to its success, but whose voice, when a matter comes to the vote, was just as efficient as that of those by whom alone it may be said to have been sustained.

“Before these members had matured their plan the poorer and less efficient members threw their eyes upon the fund, a motion was made to divide it and carried by a majority against the sense of the older and more efficient members.”

It is characteristic of his generous nature that though he disapproved—as is clear from the above extract—he should add the words that despite his disappointment, “it was impossible to be displeased with them who voted for the division as it was known that the fund, small as it was, had become an object to several and that others to whom it was a matter of indifference had, from a knowledge of this circumstance, voted with them.”

Coincidentally with the opening in 1808 of the exhibitions of the Society of Artists, Raeburn experienced a great financial disaster. He seems to have been interested actively in the firm of Henry Raeburn & Co., merchants, Shore, Leith, of which the partners were his son Henry and his son-in-law James Inglis, who was married to his step-daughter Ann Leslie. Details of the matter are somewhat vague; but the failure of the firm in that year was a heavy blow, judging from the letter

of Alexander Cunningham of 16th February, 1808 : "I had a walk of three hours on Sunday with my worthy friend Raeburn. He had realized £17,000 which is all gone. He has offered a small composition which he hopes will be accepted. He quits this to try his fate in London, which I trust in God will be successful." Raeburn received his discharge in June, 1808, but the affairs of the company were not settled finally until 1810. In the interval the artist had recovered largely the lost ground, so much so as to induce him to think of removing to London, "feeling" as Cunningham says, "that the metropolis was the proper field for a man of genius."

Clearly, from the letter just quoted, Raeburn, a couple years earlier had resolved to "try his fate" in the metropolis, and it is conceivable that the financial crash referred to, may have influenced him in that direction. His intentions seem to have been known down south, for on the 2nd of March, 1810, Sir David Wilkie mentions in his "Journal" that Raeburn was coming to London and that he was to occupy Hoppner's house. Hoppner had died in January and left Lawrence "without a rival." On the 12th of May, Wilkie notes, "Had a call from Raeburn (the painter) who told me he had come to London to look out for a house, and to see if there was any prospect of establishing himself. I took him by desire to Sir William Beechey." Again, on June 4th : "Went with Raeburn to the Crown and Anchor to meet the gentlemen of the Royal Academy. I introduced him to Flaxman; after dinner he was asked by Beechey to sit near the President (West) when his health was proposed by Flaxman and great attention was paid to him."

It is stated that during the visit Raeburn consulted Lawrence as to the advisability of settling in London and (by Cunningham) that the great Englishman "succeeded in persuading his fellow labourer in portraiture to content himself with his Scottish practice." Farther on he says that "though Raeburn never expressly said it, he sometimes, I am told, seemed to insinuate in conversations at his own fireside" that Lawrence "had been no loser by his absence from the field of competition." Gossip is generally chock-full of ambiguities. Yet fifty years afterwards we have W. E. Henley accepting and magnifying the tale—"But Lawrence persuaded him (Raeburn) to be content with his kingdom in the north, and in this way secured himself in his position as the painter of fashionable and distinguished England. He was wise in his generation, no doubt, but it is matter for lasting regret that he prevailed," and so on.

It seems to me that the story of Raeburn and Lawrence admits of a very simple explanation. The Scottish artist was a man of fifty-four and of distinguished reputation. In advising him not to "emigrate" at that age, Lawrence took an eminently sensible, and moreover, the kindest view possible of the case. A man of the standing and temperament of Lawrence could take no other view, nor can one imagine for a moment that the big-souled Raeburn would condescend to indulge in loose fire-side clatter such as that quoted. Raeburn returned to Edinburgh where there awaited him thirteen years of life, years in which he was to accomplish many great works, and to attain the highest honours which a nation can confer upon a son she loves to honour.

CHAPTER VI

KNIGHTHOOD : CLOSING SCENES

RAEBURN made a third and last visit to London in 1815 after his election to full Academy honours. He received a warm welcome from his brother Academicians, and especially so from his distinguished and younger fellow-countryman, Sir David Wilkie. As we know from his "Journal," Wilkie had a great admiration for Raeburn. In 1813 he "wrote a letter to Mr. Raeburn urging him to put forward all his strength at the next exhibition"; long afterwards, and in one of those delightful epistles to his sister, he remarks upon Velazquez being all sparkle and vivacity," "and that "to our English tastes it is unnecessary to advocate the style of Velazquez." He knows not if the comment be new, but "we appear as if identified with him, and while I am in the two galleries at the Museum (Madrid) I can almost fancy myself among English painters." The work of Raeburn strikes him "whether from imitation or instinct" as "powerfully imbued with his style."

Wilkie's judgment on this latter point is approved warmly by later critics. Commenting upon that element of atmosphere which the late R. A. M. Stevenson called the "third dimension," Mr. W. D. McKay, R.S.A., says "Velazquez is the great example of this prevision of the modern way of seeing; it is also found in the little Dutch masters, Terburg, de Hooch, Vermeer, and others and one recognizes something akin to it after a century

and a half in Raeburn." He cites "Macdonell of Glengarry" as the most notable example of that simpler treatment which allows free play to the artist's recognition of the "third dimension." In that great canvas Raeburn demonstrated emphatically that he appreciated keenly the profound significance of Reynolds's reply to the question how he overcame the difficulties of modern costume—"Have not all these light and shadow?"

There can be little doubt that Raeburn's art was appreciably affected by his London visits. It is true that from none of the masters of contemporary English portraiture had he much to learn, but the increased suavity of his manner, the modelling and colour sweeter and richer, the enrichment generally of his impasto suggest that he was certainly "not impervious to precept and example." In the subsequent few years of his life, masterpiece after masterpiece left his easel. There was that exquisite realization of femininity the famous "Mrs. Scott Moncrieff" (c.1814) whose beautifully poised head, with its clustering curls, mellow white gown, and red cloak, glow gem-like on the walls of the Scottish National Gallery; akin to it in its quality of expressing feminine charm in a supreme degree is the "Mrs. Urquhart" of the Glasgow Art Gallery. In the latter collection is also one of Raeburn's amazing portraits of elderly Scottish ladies, women who, in a marked sense, physically constitute a racial type. Better models for the painter's brush could not have been found, and in Raeburn there was the artist who could paint them with consummate skill. His genius in that direction attained probably its highest altitude in the famous "Mrs. James Campbell," a daughter of John Muirhead of Croy Leckie, and a cousin of James Watt, the great engineer; and close upon that canvas may

COLONEL ALASTAIR MACDONELL, OF
GLENGARRY

Exhibited Royal Academy 1812

In the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh



be placed the Glasgow example, another member of the clan Campbell, "Mrs. Ann Campbell," of Park, a dear and prim old lady obviously endowed richly with common sense, and not lacking in pawky humour, garbed in bonnet, mutch and Paisley shawl, in every respect one of the finest of Raeburn's canvases, a masterpiece of characterization and worthy, indeed, of one of the masters. It is interesting to mention that of that great Western Highlands clan Raeburn painted at least thirty-five members, and the brush of the Scottish master transmuted on to the canvas all the picturesque dignity of their sartorial equipment.

Other outstanding portraits of that closing period of splendour in the life of Raeburn were that of his old mentor "James Byres" of Tonley, with whom he had forgathered during his sojourn in the Eternal City, and who had returned to his native land to spend the evening of his days; "John Wauchope," Writer to the Signet, a genial soul and shrewd, judging from the rarely realized canvas in the Edinburgh Gallery; the "Sir David Milne" and "Lord Craig" of 1818; and a veritable galaxy of feminine beauty, admittedly the majority of the sitters in the ripe and charming bloom of middle life, some of them in the placid stage associated with the three-score-and-ten, few of them in the elusive attractive period of the spring-time of life. It may be that R. L. Stevenson was right, and that as he asserts "Raeburn was timid with young and pretty sitters," or he had stupefied himself with sentimentalities, or else (and here is about the truth of it) Raeburn and the rest of us labour under an obstinate blindness in one direction and know very little more about women in all these centuries than Adam when he first saw Eve !

Raeburn came at a period when Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh abounded in men eminent in literature and law and the associated professions and trades. He was a born painter of portraits, and as such he preserved to posterity the features and character of a whole generation of good society, lords and ladies, solicitors and doctors, hanging judges and heretical divines. We see them, to-day, in his canvases as they were seen by our ancestors of the late Georgian age. They were men and women whose countenances were worthy of being recorded, and in Raeburn they find a supremely worthy recorder. He painted a generation of great Scotsmen: Walter Scott, "Christopher North," Dugald Stewart, Robertson, Blair, Boswell, Wellwood, Monboddo, Duncan of Camperdown, the egregious Braxfield, and last, but not least, that homely Scot, Neil Gow, the celebrated fiddler, who, when he was sitting to the artist walked daily through the streets of Edinburgh with his old instrument under one arm, and the other arm linked in that of the Duke of Athole; Neil's honest and kindly Scots countenance and his comfortable figure strike a peculiarly national note on the walls of the Edinburgh Portrait Gallery. Raeburn painted from life all the great Scotsmen of his time, except the greatest of them all, Robert Burns. In a word he maintained a monopoly of Scotland to the close of his career. The academic honour unquestionably widened his clientele and the consummate skill and massive handling of the portraits sent by him to the Royal Academy exhibitions tended to enhance in the south his already giant reputation. Clearly it was to these factors that was due primarily the conferring upon him of the honour of knighthood. In his own native city, honours had also fallen to

his lot. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a distinction awarded for his general accomplishments and extra-professional attainments. Abroad his acquirements were freely recognized by membership of the Imperial Academy of Florence, of the New York Academy, 1817, and the South Carolina Academy, 1821.

Then came the crowning recognition of his genius at the hands of his sovereign on behalf of the people of his native land. King George the Fourth spent a fortnight in Scotland in August, 1822. He was received in Edinburgh and the ceremonies connected with that historic event were arranged and conducted by Sir Walter Scott. It was a strenuous task; there was a continuous round of ceremonial, dinners, speeches, and reviews.

As the king's visit was drawing to a close there came from Mr. Peel to Raeburn the following letter :—

“ I beg leave to acquaint you that it is His Majesty's intention to confer on you the honour of Knighthood, as a mark of his approbation of your distinguished merit as a painter.”

He was requested to be in attendance the next day at Hope-town House (on the shores of the Firth of Forth, at Queensferry, and almost opposite the modern naval base of Rosyth). The ceremony was prepared in the great saloon. There was a brilliant company present, and the noblest blood in Scotland witnessed the knighting of Henry Raeburn. It is matter of historic interest that the sword used was that of Sir Alexander Hope. Let Wilkie, who was present, tell the story in his own genial and friendly fashion. In a letter to his sister dated 15th September, 1822, he writes :—

“ You would hear that one of the exercises of the prerogative in

Scotland was to confer the honour of Knighthood upon Mr. Raeburn and Captain Adam Ferguson. This happened on the day the King left Scotland and when he was at Hopetown House. Collins and I with a variety of others were invited to dine with Sir Henry Raeburn the day afterwards. Ferguson was there and we had a most royal jollification. Sir Adam (Ferguson) blushed even more than usual upon the occasion of his honours : and the ceremony, as it happened, was told us over and over with new jokes every time. When dinner was over, we drank to the new made Knight. Sir Henry made a very modest reply in which he attributed his honours to the kindness and favour of his friends who were present. Sir Adam said he could not make so good a speech as his fellow-knight had done and that he would, if agreeable sing us a song—a proposal we received with acclamation when he sang us “The Laird o’ Cockpen,” and afterwards at our request “The Turnemspike.” Lady Raeburn would not allow herself to be called *My Lady* on any account.”

It is said that the fat, handsome king was so much influenced by the finer person and dignified bearing of Sir Henry Raeburn that he remarked to Sir Walter Scott he would have made Raeburn a baronet could he have done so without injustice to the memory of Reynolds, a sense of the fitness of things that was entirely admirable, and a good certificate to the royal common sense. His brother artists in Edinburgh entertained Sir Henry to a public dinner where the toast of the evening was proposed by Nasmyth. Further honours followed when the following May His Majesty appointed Sir Henry Raeburn his first “Limner and Painter in Scotland with all the fees, profits, rights, privileges, and advantages thereto belonging.”

It is a curious circumstance that despite honours showered upon him in his lifetime “thick as leaves in Vallombrosa,” there seems to have followed upon his decease a not easily understood hiatus in the appreciation of his work by writers on art generally.

For example, the Redgraves in those gaudy volumes on "A Century of Painters of the English School" published in 1866, place Raeburn in a chapter in which they deal with nine artists under the heading "The Contemporaries of Lawrence"! Sir Henry was "successful in miniature" and "afterwards in oil life-size": and the sapient critics go on to say "in characterizing the art of Raeburn we are placed in some difficulty from his practice being confined almost wholly to Scotland. *Little opportunity has thus been afforded us of seeing many of his works.* Those preserved by the National Gallery of Scotland do not impress us with so high an opinion of Raeburn's merits as his reputation among his brother artists would imply. *Moreover, his works are simply portraits* and do not command that attention as pictures apart from the individuals they represent, as do those of Gainsborough or Reynolds which are admired and purchased as works of art and find their way into galleries and collections when the person portrayed is unknown or an object of total indifference." The italics are mine. It is a reasonable and tolerably sound maxim in criticism that the critic should possess a good knowledge of his subject. As regards Raeburn, the brothers Redgrave appear to have overlooked that almost elementary factor.

The modern collector, critic, and connoisseur have generously and willingly paid their devoir at the shrine of Raeburn. I mentioned earlier the 8,700 guineas given for the portrait of the artist's wife, and that in 1877 forty-nine of his portraits (including the canvas of his wife) went for £6,000. In the latter year at the Burlington House Exhibition there was shown the "Dr. Nathaniel Spens," and, as is remarked justly by Sir

William Armstrong, "it astonished those in the south who, like the Redgraves had formed opinions on Raeburn's art without taking the trouble to seek it out." In Scotland the Edinburgh exhibition of Raeburn's work in 1876 had proved enlightening. The Master was re-discovered. From that year onwards appreciation of his art has been a steadily increasing quantity. Collectors at home and abroad have competed keenly for examples of his work. High-water mark, financially speaking, was touched at Christie's in 1911 when his portrait of "Mrs. Robertson Williamson" was bought by Mr. Duveen for the great sum of 22,300 guineas. This triumph was surpassed by the figure of 24,200 guineas at which the famous "Laird of Macnab" became the property of Lord Dewar.

These enormous prices provide a sharp contrast to the modest figure charged by the artist for his work. From correspondence that has been preserved we derive a good idea of his rewards. In his letter of 1st December, 1803, to Cadell & Davies, London, he says, "I have twenty guineas for a portrait the size of Burns," that was his price for a head about that period. In 1810 there is an advance to twenty-five guineas. In a letter preserved in the archives of the Buchanan Society, Glasgow, and written by Raeburn on 24th December, 1814, to "Archd. Buchanan, Esq., Glasgow," we read: "I have this morning the honour of your letter of yesterday, covering a Dft. for £26 5s., being the payment for the copy of a portrait of Geo. Buchanan, and for which I beg you will accept my best thanks." There is a modest rise by 1818 when £147 was the figure charged for the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon of Aitkenhead, near Glasgow. These portraits adorn the walls of the mansion house of

Aitkenhead, an estate still held by a direct descendant of that old Glasgow family. In connexion with this transaction, Mr. Greig reproduces a letter by Raeburn in which the artist makes a flattering reference to the generous spirit of the citizens of the "Second City of the Empire." He writes :—

"To say that the Gentlemen of Glasgow pay like princes would be doing them the highest injustice for they pay better than any of your great folks that ever I had anything to do with. I have just had the pleasure of your letter with a bill on Messrs. Kinneal & Sons for £147 for which I beg you will accept my best thanks.

"With much esteem and many good wishes for yourself and family."

It is always a matter of supreme interest to learn something of the methods of the great painters. We are fortunate in having personal evidence on this point. From one who knew him in his youthful days and sat to him when he became famous, Allan Cunningham had the following interesting and highly informative note :—

"He spoke a few words to me in his usual brief and kindly way, evidently to put me into an agreeable mood : and then, having placed me in a chair on a platform at the end of his painting room in the posture required, set up his easel beside me with the canvas ready to receive the colour. When he saw all was right he took his palette and his brush, retreated back step by step, with his face towards me, till he was nigh the other end of his room : he stood and studied for a minute more, then came up to the canvas and without looking at me, wrought upon it with colour for some time. Having done this he retreated in the same manner, studied my looks at that distance for about another minute, then came hastily up to the canvas and painted a few minutes more. I had sat to other artists. Their way was quite different. They made an outline carefully in chalk, measured it with compasses, placed the canvas close to me and looking at me almost without ceasing in the face, proceeded to fill up the outline with colour. They succeeded best in the minute detail : Raeburn best in the general result of the

expression. They obtained, by means of a multitude of little touches, what he found by broader masses. They gave more of the man—he gave most of the mind.

“I may add that I found him well informed with no professional pedantry about him. Indeed, no one could have imagined him a painter till he took up the brush and palette. He conversed with me upon mechanics and ship-building, and if I can depend upon my own imperfect judgment he had studied ship architecture with great success.”

An interesting point of technical detail may not be amiss here. Alex. Fraser, R.S.A., the famous Scottish landscapist, whose works may be studied to advantage in the Glasgow Art Galleries writing in *The Portfolio*, gives Raeburn's palette, a simple one. His colours were vermilion, raw sienna, sometimes yellow ochre instead, prussian blue, burnt sienna, ivory black, crimson lake, white, of course, and the medium he used was “gumption, a composition of sugar of lead, mastic-varnish, and linseed oil.” Much is heard of the canvas used by Raeburn, and thanks to the research work of Mr. James Greig we know now that Raeburn got his canvases from Middleton, 81 St. Martin's Lane, London—“the gent with whom I deal” are Raeburn's own words, and that this particular kind of canvas was woven at Arbroath under the encouragement of the British Linen Bank which was established to stimulate the British Linen industry.

Scott's kindly and observant cameo of Raeburn throws the man into high relief :—

“His conversation was rich and he told his story well. His manly step backwards as he went to contemplate his work at a proper distance, and when resolved on the necessary point to be touched, his step forward, were magnificent. I see him in my mind's eye with his hand under his chin, contemplating his picture which position always brought me in mind of a figure of Jupiter which I have somewhere seen.”

Strangely enough the last man who sat for his portrait to Henry Raeburn was Walter Scott. The sitting followed upon the expedition already referred to, of Scott, Ferguson, Raeburn, and other Jonathan Oldbucks, to explore the antiquities of Fife. There seems a sough of poetic equity in the fact that the greatest of Scottish portraitists, the artist who was the true founder of the Scottish School of Painting, was destined to employ his pencil for the last time on the portrait of the greatest of the Scottish novelists.

His illness was brief. There was not any visible complaint. A decay affecting the whole constitution set in, and it baffled all the efforts of medical skill. His friend, John Morrison, of Annan, calling twenty-four hours before his death, found him as he says, "with his eyes shut, but not asleep. I touched softly the hand which was lying across his heart, the hand which had been so often outstretched to welcome me."

Raeburn passed over the bourne on the 8th of July, 1823, at the age of sixty-seven.

He sleeps for ever at the Kirk of St. John in Princes Street, under the shadow of the everlasting Castle Rock, in the city of his birth, and among his ain folk.

RAEBURNS IN BRITISH GALLERIES

Cordial thanks are due to the Directors of the Galleries undernoted, who most willingly supplied me with information regarding the examples under their charge, of portraits by Raeburn.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON (Trafalgar Square).

						Height		Width
Miss Mary Hepburn	..	..	..	..	..	93½ in.	..	59 in.
Lt.-Col. Bryce McMurdo	..	..	..	..	..	94 "	..	58 "
Mrs. H. W. Lauzun	..	..	..	..	..	29½ "	..	24¾ "
Viscount Melville	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Miss Forbes	29½ "	..	24¾ "

THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON (Millbank).

Lady Dalrymple	29 "	..	24 "
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THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON (St. Martin's Place).

John Home, 1722-1808	29 "	..	24 "
F. Horner, 1778-1817	..	..	..	..	..	49½ "	..	39 "
Henry Mackenzie, 1745-1813	..	..	..	..	..	29½ "	..	24¾ "
John Playfair, 1748-1819	..	..	..	..	..	49¾ "	..	39½ "
Sir John Sinclair, 1754-1835	..	..	..	..	..	48½ "	..	38¾ "
Hugh William Williams, 1773-1829	..	..	..	..	..	29½ "	..	24½ "

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND (Princes Street, Edinburgh).

Mrs. Campbell of Ballimore	..	..	..	..	..	50 "	..	40 "
Mrs. Kennedy of Dunure	..	..	..	..	..	50 "	..	40 "
Mrs. Scott Moncrieff	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Lord Newton	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
John Wauchope, Esq., W.S.	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Mrs. Hamilton	..	..	..	..	..	94 "	..	60 "
Portrait of Alexander Bonar, Esq.	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Portrait of Mrs. Bonar	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Alexander Adam, LL.D.	..	..	..	..	..	49 "	..	39 "
Major William Clunes	..	..	..	..	..	96 "	..	60 "
Col. Alastair Macdonell of Glengarry	..	..	..	..	..	96 "	..	60 "
Lady Hume Campbell of Marchmont, and Child	..	..	..	..	..	79 "	..	60 "
Adam Rolland of Gask.	..	..	..	..	..	78 "	..	60 "
Portrait of the Painter	..	..	..	..	..	36 "	..	28 "
John Smith, Esq., of Craigend	..	..	..	..	..	30 "	..	25 "
Henry Raeburn on a Grey Pony (Sketch in Oils)	..	..	..	..	..	14 "	..	10 "

RAEBURNS IN BRITISH GALLERIES

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND (Princes Street, Edinburgh)— (Continued).

	<i>Height</i>	<i>Width</i>
Rev. Sir Henry Moncrieff Wellwood, Bart., D.D. . .	49 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. . .	40 in.
Mrs. Robert Bell	29 $\frac{3}{4}$ „ . .	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
James Hamilton, sen., M.D.	29 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	24 „
Mrs. Finlay	86 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	59 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Mr. George Kinnear	34 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	27 „
Mrs. George Kinnear	34 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	26 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Lt.-Col. Lyon	35 „ . .	26 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Dr. Gardiner	35 „ . .	26 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Study of a Dog	35 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	27 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Portrait of a Gentleman (Oval miniature)	1 $\frac{7}{8}$ „ . .	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ „

ON LOAN TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF SCOTLAND.

Sir John Sinclair, Bart. of Ulbster. Lent by Sir		
Archibald Sinclair, Bart.	93 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	60 „
Lady Carnegie. Lent by the Earl of Southesk . .	93 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	60 „
William, Sixth Marquis of Lothian. Lent by the		
Marquis of Lothian	34 $\frac{1}{4}$ „ . .	26 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Mrs. Colin Mackenzie of Portmore. Lent by Col.		
Dundas	49 „ . .	38 $\frac{1}{4}$ „

THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY (Queen St., Edinburgh).

Sir Francis Chantrey. Three slight drawings by		
Raeburn in pencil, on the back of a piece of		
paper with a drawing in profile of Raeburn by		
Chantrey. Drawing paper	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „ . .	6 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Prof. Andrew Dalzel, F.R.S.	49 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	39 „
Neil Gow, violinist	48 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	38 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Francis Horner, M.P.	30 „ . .	24 „
Robert Montgomery	48 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	38 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Prof. Thomas Reid, philosopher. Lent by the		
University of Glasgow who own another version	29 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	25 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Prof. Dugald Stewart, philosopher	29 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Prof. John Wilson, poet and essayist	93 „ . .	58 „

THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON (South Kensington).

The Rev. Alexander Dyce, M.A. when a boy, 1798–		
1869	29 $\frac{5}{8}$ „ . .	24 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Mrs. Hobson of Markfield. There is another ver-		
sion of this canvas in the V. & A.	51 $\frac{3}{8}$ „ . .	40 $\frac{3}{8}$ „

CITY ART GALLERY, MANCHESTER (Mosley Street).

Alexander, Fourth Duke of Gordon	30 „ . .	25 „
Portrait of Alexander Campbell (doubtful)	29 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Portrait of Mrs. Shafto Clerke and Daughter . .	49 $\frac{1}{2}$ „ . .	39 $\frac{1}{2}$ „

RAEBURNS IN BRITISH GALLERIES

THE GLASGOW ART GALLERIES (Kelvingrove, Glasgow).

	<i>Height</i>	<i>Width</i>
William Jamieson, jun.	30 in.	25 in.
William Mills	30 „	25 „
Alexander Campbell of Hallyards	30 „	25 „
George McIntosh	30 „	25 „
Robert Cleghorn, M.D.	30 „	25 „
William Urquhart	30 „	25 „
Mrs. William Urquhart	30 „	25 „
A Gentleman	25 „	20 „
Elizabeth Nutter or Campbell	30 „	25 „
Mungo Campbell of Hundleshope	30 „	25 „
Colin Campbell of Park	30 „	25 „
Mrs. Ann Campbell	30 „	25 „
Mrs. General Campbell	30 „	25 „
John Campbell, sen., of Morriston	30 „	25 „
Robert N. Campbell of Kailzie	30 „	25 „
Mr. Campbell	30 „	25 „
Col. Gordon of Aitkenhead	30 „	25 „

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF IRELAND (Morrison Street, Dublin).

Portrait of David, Eleventh Earl of Buchan	30 „	25 „
Figure of Soldier (?)	49 „	39½ „

THE WALKER ART GALLERY (Liverpool).

Mr. Adam Rolland of Gask	73 „	59½ „
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(In the Edinburgh Gallery is a Rolland of Gask)

THE CITY OF NOTTINGHAM MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY (The Castle, Nottingham).

Portrait of a Lady (unknown)	30½ „	25½ „
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1911. Mrs. Robertson- Williamson	22,300
1912. Mrs. Hay	21,200
1920. The Macdonald Children	20,000
1911. Lady Janet Traill	14,000
1918. Mrs. Colin Mackenzie	12,000
1920. Lady Belhaven	9,500
1922. Sir Walter Scott (1822)	9,200
1919. William, 11th Duke of Hamilton (child)	9,000
1918. Master Alexander Mackenzie	7,800

	GNS.
1919. Mrs. MacDowall	7,400
1912. Lord Newton	6,800
1907. Mrs. Hart	6,600
1918. General Mackenzie Fraser	6,400
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1919. Douglas, 8th Duke of Hamilton	6,000
1919. Lt.-Gen. Hay MacDowall	5,700
1911. Mrs. Johnston of Straiton	5,500
1911. Mrs. Dundas	5,000
1912. General A. Hay	5,000

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